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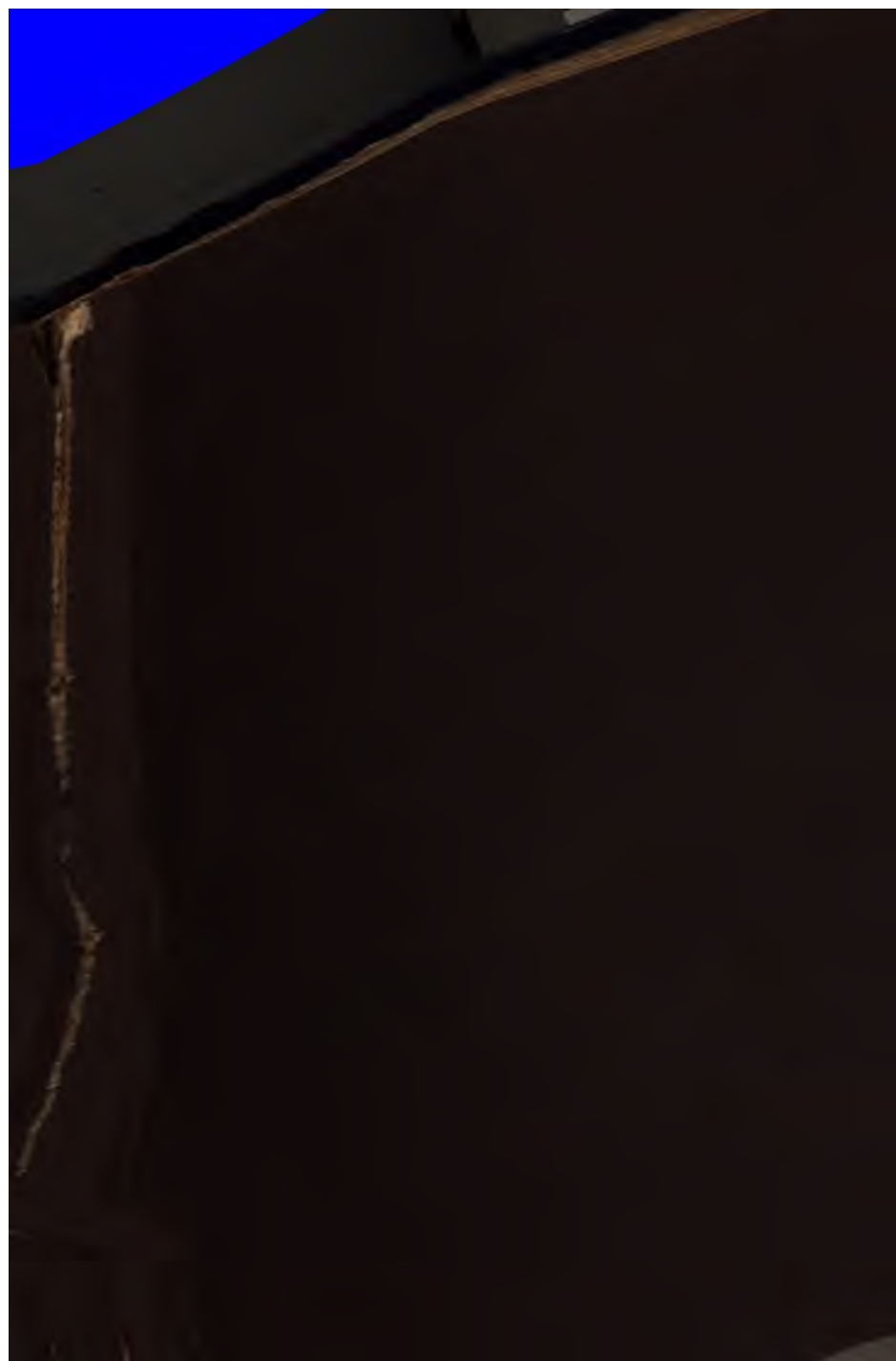
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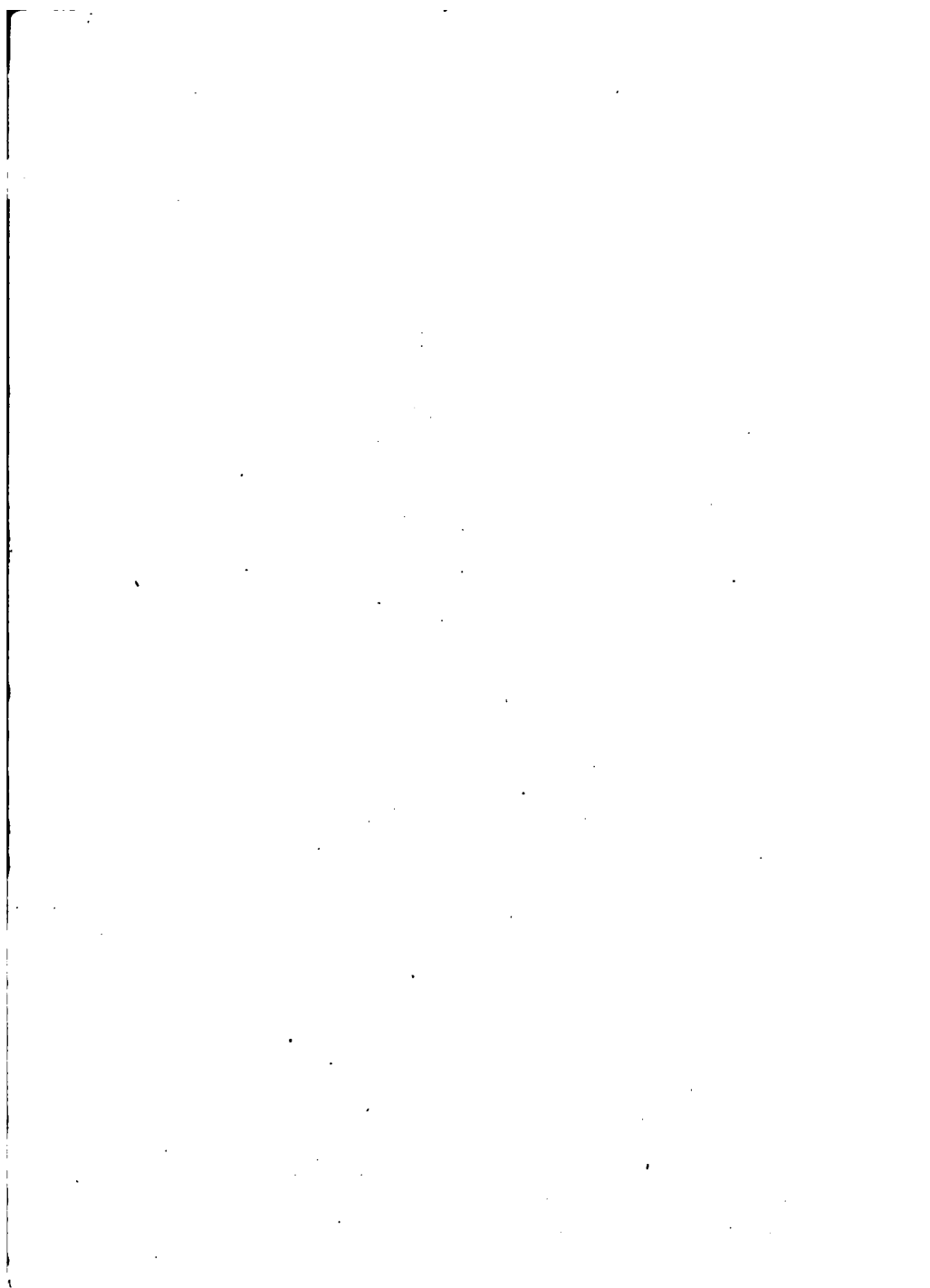




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ARCHDEACON OF HONG-KONG.

EDITED BY WILLIAM GOW GREGOR.

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FOURTEEN MONTHS

IN

CANTON.



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IN

CANTON.

BY

MRS. GRAY.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

London:

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TO
MY HUSBAND,
JOHN HENRY GRAY, M.A., LL.D.,
ARCHDEACON (LATE OF HONG KONG),
WHOSE LONG RESIDENCE IN THE CITY OF CANTON,
AND INTIMATE ACQUAINTANCE WITH
ITS INHABITANTS,
ENABLED ME TO SEE AND LEARN SO MUCH OF THEIR
MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE letters forming the subject of this small work were written during a fourteen months' residence in the city of Canton, where I enjoyed many opportunities of seeing the inner life of the Chinese, and of learning much of their daily life in their own homes. The letters were written for circulation amongst my family and a few friends who kindly expressed an interest in all I saw and did in the far-off country of China. These descriptive letters accompanied others I wrote at the same time to my family, and so they do not contain any reference to domestic matters necessary to suppress. They are therefore published in extenso. We left Liverpool in the S.S. *Abyssinian* on our outward journey, January 13th, 1877, and arrived at New York in fourteen days. Our voyage was rough and uninteresting, especially so perhaps to me, as I was very ill the whole time. Fourteen days spent in a cabin is very trying, even to the most patient of minds.

We stayed four or five days in New York, and then went on to Niagara. The Falls far surpassed my most vivid imagination of them, and I felt that had they alone been the object of our journey, we should have been well repaid. The only mistake we made was in our selection of an hotel. We followed the advice of some fellow-travellers and remained on the American side of the Falls. The Canadian side is, I think, much more lovely, one is nearer to the Falls, and the view of the Horse-shoe Fall from the windows of the hotels which are situated close to it is most charming. After a three days' stay at Niagara we went on to Chicago, where we spent two days, and were much struck with the indefatigable industry of the people in having raised such a noble town so quickly after the destruction of the greater part of the old city. We went on from Chicago to the Salt Lake City and stayed there at the Mormon Hotel, so that we might hear as much as possible of the saints and their doings. Mr. Townsend, the proprietor of the hotel, was most willing to give all details of the Mormon belief and its practices, and made us several long visits in our sitting-room, and talked until I felt so indignant that I could scarcely refrain from speaking out my mind. The position of the Salt Lake City is lovely,

and I never saw a scene that enchanted me so much, as on the evening when we drew near to it. The surrounding snow-capped mountains are grand, and when we first caught sight of them, they were of roseate hue. Brigham Young showed no small judgment when he selected this spot as the cradle of his infant kingdom. It contains in itself all that is necessary for the use of man. It abounds, especially, in mineral wealth. The valley in which the town lies embosomed is a Paradise. I was, however, much disappointed in the town itself, as I had read in some work that it was a paragon of neatness and cleanliness. It is at all events now most commercial in appearance, with large advertisements at the corners of the streets, and "Very cheap," "Not to be rivalled," and so on, written up in the shops.

After visiting all the places of interest in Salt Lake City, we left on the fourth day, and passing by the great Salt Lake itself, the waters of which were as smooth as glass, proceeded by train to San Francisco. And what can I say of that marvellous journey across the continent of America?—it disappointed me. The Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevadas are magnificent, the country we passed through in California is most charming, but I was not prepared for the hundreds of miles through the prairies, where we saw

nothing to interest us, nor for the dirty towns at which we stopped en route. The travelling, too, is to my mind uncomfortable, and the carriages not so well arranged as they might be. The refreshment rooms at the stations are overheated, and I often only put my head into them to beat a hasty retreat.

San Francisco reached, we discovered that our projected trip into the Yosemite Valley was an impossibility. The road was not open, being still choked up by snow, so with regret we had to give up our desire to see this most lovely spot. We remained at San Francisco five days, and then embarked on board the S.S. *Belgie*, and started on our long sea voyage to Hong Kong. We were equally unfortunate in the weather in this voyage as in that across the Atlantic. The only really fine day we had was that on which we started. Afterwards we experienced a succession of squalls and bad weather. The captain had predicted a smooth and rapid voyage, as our course, with the view of avoiding tempestuous weather, was 500 miles farther south than is usually the case. Day after day there was the same remark to make at dinner, "What a rough day we have had." The officers of the vessel said it was exceptionally squally and trying. One night not a person on board closed his eyes; the

wind blew a gale, the cargo shifted, and we were so much on one side that it seemed as if we must roll over. Another day, during a storm, some high waves broke against the ship, and struck the port-holes of our cabin, which was on deck, with such terrific force, that we feared, for a moment, the sea must dash in. This happened twice during the same gale.

We did not reach Japan until four weeks after we had left San Francisco, and the time seemed double in length, as the monotony of sea life was not broken by any ships in sight, save one small vessel, or by other objects of interest. I was enchanted with the approach to Japan, and the sight of land was doubly welcome after one had been so long at sea. Yokohama I delighted in; and Tokio, in which we spent ten hours rushing about in jinrickshaws, to each of which two men were harnessed, was most intensely interesting to me. How I laughed when I got into this most curious conveyance, and my two brown naked-legged Japanese ran off with me. We visited most of the buildings, temples, etc., in Tokio, our jinrickshaw men taking us from place to place with almost the speed of ponies. I longed to be able to spend some weeks in this most charming country of Japan, and returned with much regret to the *Belgic* at midnight. Had

we known that we could have taken our tickets to Yokohama, and have remained there for four or five days, and then have gone on by another service to Hong Kong, we should most certainly have done so; but the steamboat agent in London told us that by breaking our journey we should incur a fortnight's delay, and this we were not willing to risk. A week's voyage from Yokohama brought us to the port of Hong Kong. The entrance to the harbour of Hong Kong is beautiful, and I was lost in wonder and interest as I watched the ocean and coasting junks and all the river craft in their fantastic and varied forms. The town of Hong Kong, as viewed from the sea, is very fine and important-looking, and stands well, being built along the margin of the harbour, and on the side of a high hill. The harbour is very broad and deep, and capable of holding a large mercantile fleet.

I shall always retain a vivid recollection of the interest and pleasure which the quaint and vast city of Canton afforded me, where all was so different to anything I had seen before. I never went into it or its suburbs without seeing something new, something which greatly interested me. The formation of the city, its narrow streets, its innumerable alleys and turnings, its shops,

with their curiously-fashioned contents, were a never-ending study to me. My residence in Canton was, with much regret, brought abruptly to a close on the 8th of June, 1878, by a serious illness. We were compelled to return to England by the shortest possible route, and to give up our intention of visiting India on the way home. The sea voyage partially restored me to health, and I was able to land at Saigon, Singapore, Ceylon, and Aden, and to see all that it was possible to see in the short time allowed to passengers at those places. Ceylon is a lovely island, and I consider Wahwallah, with its extensive view, one of the most beautiful spots I have ever visited.

FOURTEEN MONTHS IN CANTON.

LETTER I.

CANTON, April 1st, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

WE were delighted to receive your letters, as well as those from our friends; please receive our warmest thanks for them. They only arrived at Hong Kong the same day as we did (last Monday), and as they were reserved for us at the Post Office, and not sent on to Canton, we received them as a welcome to China, and it was most delightful! You should have seen us devour all our correspondence as we sat at tiffin at the Hong Kong Hotel.

After we had lunched, we hired chairs and began to explore the city. I was much surprised at the size and extent of it, and at the palatial dimensions of the private houses. They reminded me of Italian palaces; and they look so well, as the situation on which they are built, overlooking the

harbour, is very charming. The town is kept in good order, and strikes a stranger as a prosperous city.

We wound some distance up the road which leads to the peak, then returned into the main road, and went round the Happy Valley. The weather now was cloudy and misty, so I did not see this part of the town to advantage, but I could judge how beautiful it must look on a bright, sunshiny day. On our return, we dismissed our chairs, and went into the hotel and ordered dinner. Afterwards we took a stroll through the Chinese quarter of the city, and I saw much that interested and surprised me. The lighting-up of shops and houses with large paper lanterns struck me as so very strange.

At nine o'clock P.M. we returned on board the *Belgie*, where we had been most courteously invited to spend the night. The following morning we started at eight o'clock in the river steamer for our foreign home, to which I had looked forward for so many weeks. I was astonished at the immense number of Chinese crowded on the lower deck of the steamer. These river steamers are very fine, and the journey of ninety-five miles is performed in six hours if the tide be favourable. One thing much surprised me on the steamer, and that was to see a man with a naked sword

stationed at the closed gangway. He never took his eyes off the gangway, and when he had been at his post an hour or so another man relieved him. On inquiry, I learnt that this precaution is adopted in consequence of some Chinese pirates having gone on board the steamer *Spark* some months ago as passengers. When they had reached the estuary of the Canton river, they rose, murdered the European officers and passengers, and took the treasure.

When we had passed the Bogue Forts, and had so come under the protection of other vessels, the man with the sword relinquished his post. And now I made my first acquaintance with Chinese scenery, with pagodas, with pawn towers, and with all the curious craft upon the river. As we approached Canton, the goal to which we had been hastening these ten weeks past, my heart was very full, and I was impatient to arrive at our destination. When the steamer dropped her anchor, the noise around us was deafening. Crowds of passenger boats were waiting for hire, and pushing against each other in their eagerness to get a good place near the gangways of the steamer. The boatmen were screaming out to attract the attention of people to their particular boats, and the boatwomen came on board endeavouring to secure passengers. Their costume

struck me as being so peculiar. It is a dark-blue cotton blouse and wide trousers, which reach a little way below the knee. The feet and legs are bare. And then what is so curious to our European eyes, is the hair fully dressed teapot fashion, the jadestone clasps in it, the jadestone earrings, and the jadestone bangles worn by these poor women. The women's heads of hair strike me as being beautifully neat. The whole scene around me bewildered me. I saw an old Chinaman talking to Henry, and soon learnt that it was our head servant Māk, who, hearing that there was a chance of our arriving on Tuesday, had come to the steamer to meet us.

A large crowd of Chinese had assembled to see the steamer come in; and their costumes, their shaven heads, their tails, attracted all my attention. And now Māk (our comprador) having selected a boat out of the many crowding round the steamer, we got into it, and proceeded by the river wall of Shameen* to the Chaplaincy, which is at the farther end of the small island. I thought Shameen looked very pretty as we passed along it, and I was surprised, when we pulled up before the Chaplaincy, to see what a charming, comfortable house it seemed to be. When I entered it I was still better pleased,

* The European settlement.

as the house is so well arranged. I will give you a description of my new home. It is in the Italian style of architecture, built in two stories, with two deep verandahs at the back of the house, looking upon the river. You enter a good-sized hall, and on your left is the drawing-room—a large room with two windows opening to the ground at each end, and three windows running down the side of it. From the verandah you step on to a narrow piece of grass which separates us from the bund or walk on the river wall.

From the front door you face the wide grass walk, which goes down the entire length of the settlement.

Our house is in the same compound as the church, which is also of Italian architecture, and which seems to me large, considering the small number amongst the community who are members of the Church of England. The church, our house, and the wall which surrounds them, are painted a stone colour in two shades. I like our part of Shameen much. It is at the extreme end of the small island, and is all to ourselves. We have a beautiful view of the broad river Pearl.

The name Shameen, means “sand face,” and was given to the settlement partly from the fact that, until the Europeans bought it, it was but a

sand-bank ; and partly from the shape of the island resembling a human face. It is a small island, only a mile and a half in circumference. The bund encircling it is ornamented by a row of banyan-trees, which look so green at this time of year.

The houses in the settlement are very handsome and the whole of it is beautifully laid out. The walks are all bordered by the banyan-trees. I am much struck with the tropical plants I have seen in the gardens, especially with the palm-trees. Our heavy luggage not having arrived, we are occupying ourselves by walking into the city, and have already seen several of the interesting places in it. We have visited many of the old chinaware shops, and have picked up, even in these two or three days, some good pieces of ancient blue china, so our drawing-room begins to look homelike. You must remember that the Chaplaincy is already furnished. We have purchased some small, square Chinese carpets, some of which are yellow in the ground colour, with devices in blue ; others white in the ground colour, with most curious patterns in serpents, ancient characters (such as Shau, meaning longevity), and various animals. In make they much resemble coarse tapestry. We could, had we wished, have bought European carpets, as we saw some hanging up in the street where we made

our purchases, and I believe that the houses in Shameen generally are carpeted with them ; but we intend to embellish our house as much as possible in Chinese style. On our arrival (which was somewhat unexpected) at the Chaplaincy, the whole house was in disorder, and the dining-room floor was in the hands of a painter ; but a very short time sufficed for the Chinese boys to arrange the furniture, and as the floors are painted in the sitting-rooms as well as the bedrooms, there is no need to lay down carpets, as with us in England. Whilst we were still in disorder, a friend of Henry's arrived in her chair, and most kindly begged of us to stay with her for a few days, until our house could be made ready for our use ; but we declined her kind invitation, as, after our journey of ten weeks, we longed to be quiet in our own house.

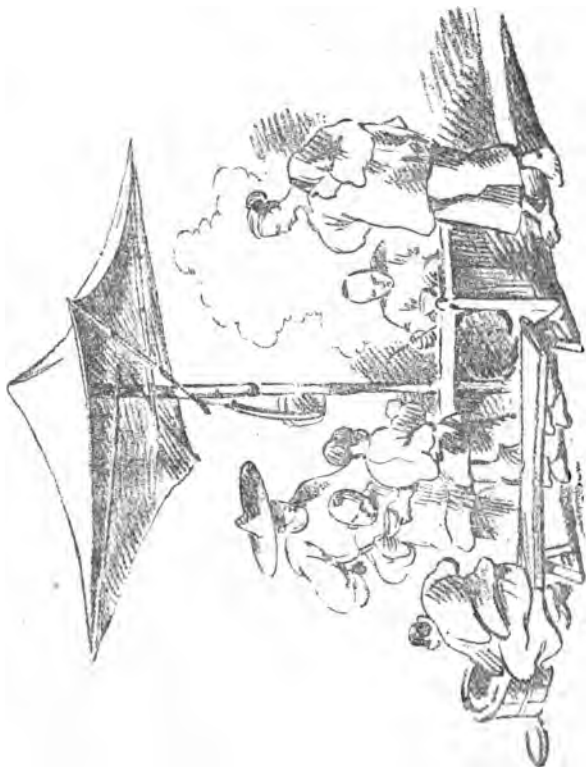
During the ten days we have been here, we must have walked five or six miles daily, and have stood about for hours sightseeing. Oh ! there is so much to see in Canton, and all is so different to what one meets with in European cities. The narrow, long, numerous streets, with their brilliant signboards in all colours, are very curious. These signboards hang in front of the shops, and bear the names of the owners, and the kind of articles sold in the shops.

You cannot imagine how gay they are. Some are eight to ten feet long, and are painted scarlet with raised characters in black—or blue with raised letters in gold—or white with red characters; in fact there is every variety excepting green boards, which are rarely to be seen. The streets often contain shops of one kind only, so you see on a whole row of many-coloured signboards a shoe, a stocking, a musical instrument, or a hat, painted at the bottom, according to the article sold in that particular street. Over some shops hang signboards made in the shape of the article sold in them, such as a hat suspended over a hatter's, a stocking over a hosier's. One particular shop I passed amused me much. It belonged to a dentist, and beside the characteristic signboard denoting the business of the owner, there was a large-sized figure, well executed and coloured, of a man in the act of brushing a splendid row of white teeth. Sometimes a dentist indicates his calling by hanging at the doorpost of his shop strings of decayed teeth. The streets bear very curious names, which Henry translated for me in some instances. I will give you a few of these names for examples. There are "Peace Street," "Bright Cloud Street," "Street of Everlasting Love," "Street of One Hundred Grandsons," "Street of a Thousand Beatitudes," "Street of

the Ascending Dragon," "Street of the Reposing Dragon," etc. Again, some streets are distinguished from others by the numbers which they bear. Many of the principal streets are named thus: "First Ward," "Second Ward," "Third Ward," etc. I have thoroughly enjoyed the shopping, and wish you could see us enter a shop, salute the master of it, receive his chin-chin in return, then take a seat in the inner shop (for, in many cases, the shops are divided into two compartments), and receive a tiny cup of *the simple*, in its full sense, as it is without milk or sugar. Then you mention what you require, and the article is brought in and displayed before you. The master of the shop names his price. Henry, after appearing to reflect for a few seconds, probably offers half what is demanded, and the bargaining is then begun. It is all done in perfect good humour. Sometimes Henry's first offer is accepted, and then one knows that it is more than a fair price; sometimes he advances nearer to the merchant's demand, but he does this slowly, and, as a rule, as he advances the owner of the shop drops his price little by little. In a street, however, where the foreigners generally deal, which is close to Shameen, the price is a fixed one. In this street are some beautiful shops containing ivory carvings, jewellery, silk goods, and black

wood furniture. In the provision shops you see strange sights. In some I have noticed dried rats, cooked dogs' flesh—which when cut up, as it is, into joints for sale, I have mistaken for sucking-pig—ducks' bills, edible birds' nests, and every variety of meat and fish. The latter is a disgusting sight, as to make it look fresh each piece when cut is smeared over with blood. In poulterers' shops I have seen owls, white storks with their eyes sewn up to prevent them from taking fright at the passers-by, as they stand usually on one leg on perches in front of the shops, lizards, tortoises, etc., all for human food. Nothing is wasted by the thrifty Chinese: all and every part of an animal is reckoned by them as good to be eaten. I have also observed a great number of open-air stalls, which are placed either under mat coverings, or simply under large umbrellas made of dried palm-leaves. I have seen most picturesque groups standing round these stalls drinking soup, or eating boiled rice with chopsticks, or perhaps taking cakes or other light refreshment. The Chinese are most inveterate gamblers, and I have noticed small boys gambling at stalls where nuts, oranges, or other fruits are sold. In the streets and squares one often sees groups of four or five Chinese squatting, who are engaged in playing cards and dominoes, whilst others stand and

look on at the game. I find the Chinese most polite in the streets, always making room for us to pass; and although they follow us and stand at



OPEN-AIR REFRESHMENT STALL.

the entrance of the shops when we enter them, to gaze at us, they are most good-tempered. When Henry speaks Chinese they are much amused

and say, so he tells me, "He speaks the clear language." When he writes down our address so that our purchases may be sent to us, our attentive followers cry out sometimes, "This barbarian has a written language."

You must understand that the shop fronts are not glazed; all are open to the air. The shops where they sell precious stones, especially jade-stone, form one long street, and in its numerous shops are contained thousands of pounds' worth of jadestone, so much prized by Chinese of all ranks. This jadestone street is quite a mile in length, with shops on each side of it for the sale of jade and other stones. I cannot convey to you an idea of the size of Canton with its hundreds and hundreds of narrow streets. How Henry can find his way about as he does puzzles me; he knows every short cut in this vast labyrinth of streets and lanes, every queer, tortuous turn seems familiar to him. He is a splendid guide in the city. All his Chinese friends seem delighted to see him, ask him where he has been, congratulate me, ask my age, if I come from England, etc. As we pass along, I often hear the Chinese in the streets or in the shops say "Sing-Sang," the Chinese for teacher, and one of the names by which Henry is known to them.

LETTER II.

TAAI-TUNG-KOO-TSZE MONASTERY, April 4th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

PICTURE us most comfortably seated in an upper room of a garden house of a Buddhist monastery, on the other side of the Pearl River from Shameen. Henry has spent many, many days in this retreat before, and the monks have most kindly given him the garden house for his use. Our room is very quaint in its divisions, and in one corner, or perhaps, more correctly speaking, in a small room separated from the one we are in, is a wooden Chinese bed. Our sitting-room is divided into two compartments by wooden trellis carving. In the divisions there are fragments of pictures. When new it must have been very pretty, but it requires to be put in order, and Henry tells me that this is a thing a Chinese does not understand. He builds, by degrees the place becomes dilapidated, but no money is spent upon it; and at last, when the building will no longer hold together, it is pulled down, and a new place raised upon the site. The air is lovely; and as it is warm to-day, we are sitting with the windows (such windows! divided into the smallest panes, pleasing to the eye of the medievalist) thrown open. The trees

in the garden are tall and shady; a fine pomelo-tree is opposite our windows, the branches of which overhang a small square pond surrounded by brickwork. Beyond is a pavilion with one of the beautiful double wooden roofs. We have brought a table, chairs, and a lunch box from the Chaplaincy. On our arrival we saw one of the few monks belonging to this monastery, and he took us into the visitors' room. It is very charming, furnished with carved black wood furniture, and the windows have small panes set in dark wood of a curious pattern.

I have just seen a lovely large butterfly pass the windows, its wings black and as soft-looking as velvet. The birds are singing sweetly in the garden. Here we are as busy as bees—I with my correspondence, and Henry sitting at my side correcting his manuscripts. Before we left home, a Chinese merchant, an old friend of Henry's, called. He is a good-tempered-looking old man of seventy-six years of age. As he spoke pigeon English, I understood but little of what he said. He stared at me, asked my age, and said patronisingly, "You proper face." When speaking of the present Emperor's age (he is a child of five years), he said, "But his mother very cunning, take care of that pigeon," meaning State affairs. When Henry asked him if his new wife (No. 2)

had any children, he answered, "No, no piecee : one piecee come but no stay," meaning the child was dead. The poor old gentleman could not understand me at all.

On Sunday evening, after the three o'clock service, we started in a slipper boat for Whampoa, which is at a distance of eleven miles down the river, as Henry is anxious to resume evening services there on Sundays. The place is much altered since he first began to hold services at this port. The large ships are no longer to be seen in its roadstead. The docks, etc., have been sold to the Chinese, and the whole place looks deserted and wretched. The large ocean steamers go up straight to Canton now, and do not, as formerly, discharge their cargoes at Whampoa. As the tide was in our favour, we went down to Whampoa in two hours; but the return journey was very long, over four hours, and we did not reach home until midnight. On our way there we saw a long procession of state barges, about eighteen in number. The Chinese Governor was returning to Canton from an inspection of the forts down the river. I was filled with wonder as I saw the river swarming with its boating population. Henry tells me that there are, it is reckoned, 300,000 human beings who live entirely in their boats. They never stay on land and

are a distinct community, one may say, to the population on shore. It has been conjectured that they are the descendants of rebels who were compelled by an emperor of the past to be thus cut off from communion with their fellow men. There are anchorages marked out for each set of boats, and there are streets and streets of boats thickly packed together. Men, women, boys and girls, but more particularly women, scull and row these boats. The costume of the latter is a tunic and wide, short trousers, coming to the middle of the leg, in dark-blue cotton. They wear neither shoes nor stockings. I am getting accustomed to the naked legs and feet of the lower orders. Even the city guard are without stockings. I have noticed that many superior-looking men take off their smart, embroidered shoes and carry them when it rains.

In the streets I have been much struck with the quiet, gentle deportment of the Chinese. I have already seen some small-footed women. One we met on our way to this monastery was riding on the back of her female attendant.* She was the young wife, Henry thought, of a farmer, on her way to visit a friend in one of the neighbouring villages.

* Chinese ladies sometimes ride on the backs of their amahs when going from village to village to pay visits to their friends. This custom they also adopt in getting about their large gardens.

LETTER III.

CANTON, April 12th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

WE paid several calls' on Wednesday, and found most of our friends at home. I was glad to have an opportunity of seeing the interior of the houses in our settlement. I was much struck with their English appearance, carpeted as they are with English carpets, many well-known engravings hanging on the walls. The black wood furniture and the large verandahs alone make one realise that one is in the East, when seated in one of these large drawing-rooms. I think when Europeans return to their native lands, they must feel very much disappointed with the contracted, cramped houses they have to live in. When our calls were paid, we went into the city, and after a search in some of the curiosity shops for blue china, we entered the Flowery Forest Monastery. The monks were having a meal in the hall, and plentiful the feast appeared to be, with its many dishes containing various portions of food. They rose and welcomed us, and expressed great pleasure in seeing Henry again. We begged them (you can imagine mine was the pantomimic

action) to be seated. They offered us seats at another table, and one of the young monks brought us tea in covered cups. Another of them, whose duty it is to receive visitors, sat down with us, and Henry and he chin-chinned each other by touching cups, and then we sipped our tea. Dried fruit of various kinds, lichees, wampees, dragon's eyes, dried ginger, etc., were placed on the centre of the table in a lacquered box made in many compartments. The monk handed the dried fruit to us on a little two-pronged fork, and opened the dried lichees before he passed them to us. Henry, then, in true Chinese style, took a piece of the dried fruit on the little fork, rose, and put it into our host's mouth. In the meantime the repast was going on at the other table close to us. I should think there must have been some thirty little china bowls, with various kinds of food in them, in the centre of the table. Meat is forbidden to these Buddhist monks, but it is by no means certain that sundry small pieces of pork and other flesh were not to be found in these little bowls. Each monk had his own basin in one hand, the chopsticks in the other, and he helped himself first to one of the dainties, then to another, from the centre of the table. This is the way all Chinese take their food. When the repast was over, the monks came to our table and

stood by us; each then spoke to us, took some morsel from our centre dish, and handed it to us. The dragon's eyes and other kinds of dried fruit were so distasteful to me, that I had to take them slyly from my mouth and hide them in my saucer. The monks are dirty-looking men, with un-intellectual faces, and the long nails that they wear on some of their fingers look as if they had not seen soap and water for many a long day. They are very courteous, and the ceremony of bowing at each of the little doorways in taking leave of the monk who conducts you to the street, is very wearisome.

On leaving this reception hall we went to see the shrine of The Five Hundred Disciples of Buddha. It is a most extraordinary sight. The figures, which are almost life-size, are made in clay and gilded, and as they have just been restored they are extremely bright. As you enter the shrine you see long rows of these figures, sitting on a raised platform, in lines and cross lines. Each figure represents a disciple according to his idea of sanctity. Some hold their arms upright, which have stiffened in this position; one I saw with both arms so raised; others are in contemplative postures. One carried a crozier in his hand, another had a mitre on his head, while others wore crowns. All are

represented as having dark-blue hair, and in some instances the figures have blue beards. No two are alike. In a few cases represented, the disciples being especially holy, a little image of Buddha is formed in the chest, giving a most curious appearance to the idol. The vestments these figures wear are, curiously enough, Catholic in form. We afterwards passed through the Beggars' Square; here beggars are allowed to assemble, and to sleep, and in case of death are provided with a coffin by the guild of the Fokien merchants. The rules of the beggars' guild are strict, and elders are appointed to enforce them. The beggars are under the protection of special deities.

From the Beggars' Square we returned home. You perhaps can imagine how strange I feel at present in this new life; to be waited upon only by men, not to have a female servant in the establishment, for I have acted on Henry's advice, and have not engaged an amah. He thinks these women given to gossiping, and a great evil in a house. It seems to me as if I were staying at an hotel, as I do not know what will appear at table; nor have I seen my cook, as he does not come into the house. The servants' offices are a low range of buildings joined to the house on the one side. The singular costume

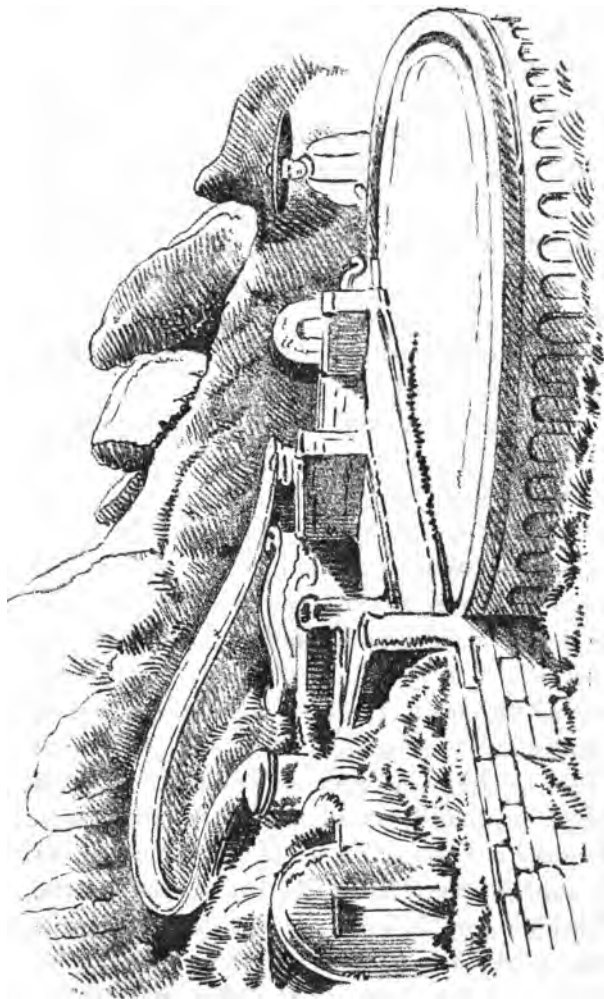
of the servants strikes me much ; their queer lingo I cannot understand—naturally they have the same difficulty in respect to my English. Our head boy being asked the other day if he knew what I said, replied, “I no savez, missussi talkee plover English.” Our dining-room is now ready, and I must say our rooms are very comfortable, I hope the account of my illness, which Henry sent you last week, did not alarm you much. I was very ill at the time, and for two or three days the doctor could not make out what was the matter with me. He looked very serious, and alarmed Henry by saying that he had been called in only just in time. He was surprised at the agony I suffered not lessening with the remedies. At last he pronounced the illness to be caused by paint poisoning, and said that I must, ill as I was, be taken in a boat across the river, and sit for some hours in one of the gardens at Fa-tee, as change of air was really necessary for me. The marvellous effect that the remedy produced upon me proved that Dr. Brereton was right in his treatment. I was helped to the boat, and could scarcely sit upright, but after I had been in the garden house of our favourite retreat an hour or so I began to feel better, and the miserable feeling of nausea, which had not left me for six days, was sensibly lessened. On my return at night I

was much better, and from that time improved rapidly. My experience of painter's colic is that it is one of the most painful illnesses possible. In my case the fever was so high that in the first night I was seized I became partly delirious. Henry says, in all his experience of visiting amongst the sick at Canton, he has not known any patient so scorched up with fever as I was.

I must now tell you about a day's excursion we made into the country. Do you remember Henry saying, before we left England, that he would take me as soon as possible the forty miles' trip through the valleys encircling the White Cloud Mountains? No European but he knows this route, and he accidentally discovered it some years ago. Two mountain chairs, which are much lighter than those used for the city and level places, were brought round to the Chaplaincy at a very early hour yesterday morning. These chairs are made of bamboo rods, and have a covering of dark-green cotton over the head and sides, which can be taken off the light bamboo poles, which support it, at pleasure. In our case it was taken off as soon as we had left the city, and not replaced. We started immediately after the morning service, a little after nine o'clock. Such a cavalcade we formed, with our fourteen chair coolies and an old coolie

whom Henry has employed for years to accompany him in all his excursions. The chair coolies when not engaged in carrying us (we had the double number, Henry eight and I six, so as to have relays) had long bamboo poles resting on their shoulders, from one end of which hung their large circular hats, and from the other end the clothes of those carrying the chairs were suspended. The hats belonging to the chair coolies are either blue, or red and black; they have pointed crowns, and are about the size of a lady's sunshade. The men, after we had started, only wore short dark-blue or brown cotton drawers, reaching to the knee; some had on straw sandals, others walked the whole distance with naked feet. Their brown shoulders glistened in the sun, and my heart bled at the deep-red marks made by the pressure of the chair-poles on them. Imagine any European carrying a burden and walking forty miles in the day, and for half that distance having to share the weight of a chair and its passenger! Our route first took us through the city, then through its suburbs and outlying villages. The number of Chinese going in the same direction as ourselves was very great, as the worshipping of the tombs had just begun. Most of these people were on foot, but some went along in chairs. They carried with them long strings of paper

ingots, to burn at the tombs. These ingots, or mock-money, are done up like little sugar-loaves, and are strung on cord. I saw men carrying five or six such long strings of ingots from the end of their bamboos. They also had offerings of cake in red painted boxes, fire-crackers, and bright-coloured and white paper, the latter of which they stick in strips on the graves. I also saw some men carrying roasted pigs cooked whole, for offerings. The Chinese are too thrifty to leave these at the tombs; they merely offer them, then bring them home and feast on them with their relations. All male members of a family must worship their ancestors' tombs yearly, and we met fathers taking their sons of all ages with them to the graves. But before I say more on this subject, I must tell you what we saw before we reached the place of tombs. When we had passed through the suburbs of the city we came to the asylum, or rather, small village, set apart for lepers. Here one sees the disease of leprosy in all stages; in some cases it is not apparent to the stranger, in others it has assumed a most repulsive form, and is more sad to look upon than anything I had ever witnessed. One young girl had only the stumps of her hands left, and her feet were without toes. The lepers intermarry, and thus the disease is propagated and increased; it is most



A CHINESE TOUR.

sad to see the little children affected by this loathsome disease. The Government support this leper village, but those who are capable of working make ropes, which they sell, and so obtain additional comforts for themselves. These poor lepers have also their temple and their especial god. After walking through this sad place, where all are most anxious to display their deformities to get a kumshaw from the strangers, we got into our chairs. We next passed by a hill where malefactors who have been decapitated are buried. A stream of people, bearing offerings, was passing on, and others we met were returning empty-handed from the graves. The tombs were soon on all sides of us; they are in the form of a horse-shoe, and are built on the sides of the mountain in stone or asphalte. These belong to the rich; the graves of the poorer class are simply marked by an upright stone or a conical mound of earth. We now heard the report of numberless fire-crackers being let off on all sides to frighten away evil spirits, and this sound continued at intervals the whole day. It gives one the effect of military funerals, as if salutes were being fired over the graves. The hills were literally covered by worshippers. The tombs do not, as a rule, look imposing, as they are hollowed out of the hills, and with few

exceptions are plain. Some have high granite pillars and red flag poles in front of them, denoting the rank of the deceased. A few have rows of animals and attendants carved in stone, which form an avenue, and lead to the tomb of a man of high rank.

We very much enjoyed the country, which became pretty, and in parts really beautiful after we had left the city far behind us. On we went past fields prepared for rice, and by small patches of the rice growing thick together, which after a short time will be transplanted, and will be sufficient to cover several acres. We passed by lands prepared for every description of seed. It was most interesting to me to see agricultural labour going on according to Chinese custom. This is of a most primitive kind: they plough with buffaloes; the harrow is most curious, something like a gridiron, and with this they mix the mud and water together to prepare the land for the transplanting of the young rice. The fields are wonderfully small here, which is partly owing, so Henry says, to the need of facilitating irrigation. The seed is sown by hand. I was struck by noticing a man banking up the earth over some beds containing vegetable seeds. He used a large spade for this purpose, to which a double cord was attached, and a boy standing on the

opposite side of the bed assisted the labourer by pulling the spade towards him by the cord. None of these peasants seemed pressed for time; they rise very early and work late, and they look as if they do not know what it is to be in a hurry. We passed by groves and groves of peach-trees, the fruit of which is now set, but will not be ready for the market until June.

At one o'clock we stopped at a farmhouse, where Henry has lunched several times before when he has made this long excursion. How can I describe this strange scene? First, a woman came out, took care of me, and led me into what I thought was a kitchen. In trooped men and boys to stare at me; the little boys only seven or eight years of age amused me, as in most instances they had babies strapped on to their backs. One of these odd-looking little babies was unwound from a boy's back and given me to nurse. The little thing, about six months old, had a silver chain, with charms hanging to it, round his neck, and silver bangles on his arms and legs. I then joined Henry, who was in the large hall of the house, and I found our coolie placing our luncheon on the table. We were objects of the greatest interest to the whole clan, which was collected in all its force to-day. The family had just returned from worshipping the tombs of their

ancestors, and were about to spread their repast in this large hall; but on our arrival they most kindly left it for our use, and themselves dined *al fresco*. We must have had sixty persons round us, and when we began to eat they pressed close to us, and were most anxious to see how we used our knives and forks. They would have become troublesome, had not the elders of the clan kept them in order. It was so curious to feel that our ways were looked upon as so barbarous and foreign. Possibly they concluded that when we became more enlightened, we should copy them in the use of chopsticks, etc.

When we had finished our luncheon, we went outside, and found a large gathering sitting on the ground, with the remains of a feast before them. This was the ancestral feast, and is supposed by the people to come direct to them from their ancestors, as the expenses of it are defrayed from the endowment of the ancestral altar. Every member of the clan partakes of this feast, and one of the greatest punishments which can be inflicted on an undutiful son is to prevent him from participating in it. The country became still more charming after we left the farmhouse, and the mountains and valleys were beautiful with the shades of the sun upon them.

We should have missed the finest part of the

scenery if Henry had not known the route, as the chair coolies wished to take us direct over a high hill after we left the farmhouse, which would have shortened the journey by some six or seven miles. They refused to take us where Henry intended to go, round the base of this hill. I got out of my chair and we walked on, the men stoutly declining to give in, and they became threatening in their attitude. When we had walked on a mile (I must own with depressed feelings on my part, as we were at least twenty-six miles from home) the chair coolies, seeing that they could not intimidate us, brought up the chairs, and we continued our long journey. Our way now led us across the large Canton plain, which is highly cultivated, and produces tobacco, cotton, sugar, indigo, rice, and vegetables of various kinds.

It was eight o'clock P.M., when we were some five miles from the city, and by this time it had become quite dark. I was in front, and not hearing the voices of Henry's coolies, I became uneasy, and called out to him. No answer came, and I called again. I had been warned by Henry not to show distrust of the Chinese, so, with as cheerful a voice as I could command, I continued to call, but in vain—no answer came. I felt anxious, as just after we started I had been told that I was

foolish in going out for an excursion, such as we intended to take, with my gold earrings, locket, and rings all exposed to view. The men too had been so very insubordinate, and one had looked so evil in the discussion of the choice of routes, that I feared something might have happened to Henry. I could neither speak nor understand a word of Chinese, and, therefore, could not tell the coolies to stop, so on we went. After some ten minutes or more, we came to one of the resting-places erected by some man as a meritorious work, and here I was put down on the floor. I can assure you my feelings were not enviable at that moment. I had not even our old coolie with me, as he had succumbed to the fatigue of the long walk, and had remained in one of the villages we had passed through. Some people sitting about this resting-place, wishing, I suppose, to see what I was like, thrust one of the large coloured paper lanterns into the chair, and then laughed at my appearance. I hoped to remain in this place until Henry's chair might arrive, but to my disappointment up I was taken after a delay of five minutes, and on we marched. You can imagine what my joy was when the steps of the other chair coolies became audible. When Henry came up, he told me that he had also felt very anxious about me. The coolies carrying his

chair had become very much fatigued, and it was time for the other four to take their turn, but when inquired for, they were nowhere to be found. They had evidently given their friends the slip, and had slunk off in the dark. We arrived home about half-past nine, very tired, but having enjoyed the day's excursion most thoroughly.

LETTER IV.

CANTON, April 15th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

AFTER I had finished writing my letters the other afternoon, we had dinner in our garden house at the monastery, at seven o'clock, and then started for the Temple of Paak-taai, where a festival was taking place in honour of the god Paak-Taai, one of the most popular deities in China. But I must tell you first how easily the Chinese servants manage these impromptu picnic dinners. The cook and waiting-boys go over to the monastery by boat, taking with them the provisions, and the utensils for cooking, also a table-cloth and everything necessary for the table. All is packed up in a large box, which is slung by ropes on a bamboo pole and carried on the shoulders of a coolie and the boy belonging to

the boat. We dine just as if we were at home, having soups, entrées, etc. All is cooked in the queerest little kitchen imaginable at the monastery. A Chinese cook is never at fault, however long dinner is kept waiting. For instance, last night we were out very late, as the tide was against us, and we had a long distance to row back to Shameen. The dinner was ordered for half-past seven, but we did not sit down to it until nine o'clock. Yet the food was as well cooked and as hot as if we had not been unpunctual. Had we returned at half-past seven we should have found dinner ready to be served. When we arrived at the Temple of Paak-tai it was past eight o'clock, and we found that the singular ceremony that we wished to see was nearly over, so we left, making up our minds to return to the temple the following evening, which was the third and last night of the ceremony. At this festival of Paak-tai the Chinese take their larks (this is the favourite bird with the Chinese, and not only do very many possess them, but the gentry as well as poorer people pay large sums for them if they sing well), and suspend the cages from bamboo poles, placed across the temple, about six feet from the ground. They leave their birds from six to half-past seven P.M., three evenings in succession, in this temple, to do honour to Paak-tai.

When they are brought in, the cages are covered with handkerchiefs. On these being withdrawn, the birds break out into a volume of song, mistaking, one would suppose, the glare of light from hundreds of lamps, suspended from the roof of the temple, for broad daylight. Bird sings against bird, trying to silence each other, until the noise is deafening. The Chinese lark is a handsome bird, larger than our English lark, and is capable of being taught to imitate various sounds;* it flaps its wings when it sings, and it continues its song for long periods, but the note is not so sweet as that of our English lark. Not only is Paak-taai supposed to be honoured by this ovation from the larks, but the owners of the birds expect blessings from the god for their attention to him. The temple was crowded by people of the poorer class, who seemed to thoroughly enjoy this concert of larks. There were some hundreds of these songsters suspended in their ornamental cages from the poles. I am so much amused by the extreme care the Chinese men bestow upon their feathered favourites. You will meet with a sober-looking man dressed in a

* I subsequently saw one on board a steamer at Whampoa which had been taught to imitate the barking of a dog, and the mewing of a cat, for which its owner, a Chinese, asked the sum of 60 dollars.

beautiful long silk coat, holding in his open hand a cage in which you may see a lark or other pet bird. I concluded when I first met these men that the birds were for sale, but Henry much amused me by saying that it is a custom in Canton for the Chinese to take their birds out for change of air. An English lady told me the other day, that when her parrot was very ill, her compradore advised her to engage a bird coolie to take it to the White Cloud Mountains for change of air and scene.

On Wednesday we heard that the procession in honour of Paak-tai would pass through the streets, so we went to a grass-cloth shop, before which the procession was advertised, by news-vendors, to pass. We arrived much too early at the shop, a fact one cannot help in China, for as a rule punctuality is unknown, and one must wait long for these ceremonies, or perhaps miss them altogether. We were invited into the inner shop and were refreshed by a cup of tea, the tea being handed first to Henry, according to true Chinese etiquette. On such occasions I sit quietly by, and can observe all so well from the fact (humiliating as it may be) that no one notices me, all the attention being paid to my husband. He has argued several times with Chinese gentlemen on the subject of equality between men and women,

and has pointed out to them the duty of giving to woman her proper position. One with whom he was conversing on the subject did not attempt to argue the point, but observed quietly in conclusion, "Man is as the sun, woman as the moon." The carving is most beautiful in this shop, some of it is gilded, some is left its natural colour. It is most ornamental and well executed. It forms a kind of half screen at the end of the shop, under which is the image of the god specially worshipped by the shopmen. A ledge is in front of the idol, on which paper flowers, lights, and joss-sticks are arranged.

A lamp, formed of a floating wick placed in a glass receptacle suspended from the ceiling, hangs before this tutelary god, and is lighted morning and night. Joss-sticks are also burnt before it twice daily. When it was announced that the procession was in sight we went into the outer shop, and sat upon chairs placed for us on a raised platform. The shop was barricaded with a ladder put across the opening, to prevent the crowd pushing into it.

We were a source of the greatest interest to all the men in the street, and also to the women and children, who were sitting in the shops opposite. The latter had come in from the country to see the procession.

The men forming the procession itself constantly turned to stare at us, and laughed at and nodded to us.

The dark, handsome beard of an English friend who accompanied us, attracted much attention. Only the aged are allowed to wear beards in China, and one sees none but short-pointed white beards on these old men's faces. You must picture us in a street as narrow as an alley in London, a crowd thickly packed, perhaps three deep on each side of the street, and a narrow passage in the middle only just sufficiently large enough to let the procession squeeze through. We literally sat in the street: as there are no steps leading into a shop, you enter it direct from the street.

There is the most marvellous economy of space practised in this city, and from the roof of one of its high pawn towers you cannot perceive a break, no streets: the roofs of the houses seem to touch each other. Even in the narrow streets there are stalls in all available nooks and corners, and it is difficult for our chairs to get along. It requires a good deal of management, and a great deal of noise on the part of the chair coolies, when two chairs meet and have to pass each other. To return from this digression: the procession was immensely long, and occupied one hour in passing

by the shop in which we were seated. First there came men bearing large lanterns, Paak-taai's name and titles painted on them; then followed banner-men, with banners aloft, embroidered handsomely and edged with deep, many-coloured fringes, some events in Paak-taai's life forming the subject of the embroidery.

We saw also long, low, double banners, connected by bars of wood, supported by men who, walking between them, were hidden from view. These were ornamented with little figures dressed in various costumes, representing scenes in Paak-taai's history. These double banners were in some cases glazed. They were wonderfully ornamented with kingfisher's feathers laid on gilt, and which, to an unpractised eye, resembled enamel work. Then came men bearing red boards with many titles on them, also insignia of celestial rank, which have been conferred on Paak-taai by the present and past emperors. The procession was, as you may say, divided into groups by these various banners, ornamental poles and long banners given by different districts to Paak-taai. Attendants accompanied them dressed in white, or in bright-coloured silk robes. These men, some of whom are men of position, volunteer for the honour of walking in the god's procession. In each division of the

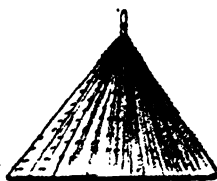
procession there were children, some very young, perhaps four or five years of age only, who rode on the queer little Chinese ponies. These boys and girls (the latter sit astride like boys) were dressed fantastically to represent heroes and heroines in Paak-taai's time. Poor little things, they had started at six o'clock A.M., and it was past noon when we saw them. One very small hero had succumbed and was in the arms of an attendant fast asleep, his pony riderless. Some, in fact many of the children, belong to the gentry, and have attendants supporting them on each side of the pony, who feed them constantly with biscuits and sweets. One little boy much amused us, and also the crowd about us. He carried a large representation of a fabulous monster in his arms. On his face he wore a large beard, and had a helmet on his head with long feathers. As he passed us, he puffed out his little cheeks, and put his arms akimbo, preserving the utmost gravity of face. He was received with shouts of laughter by the people. I should think fifty of these boys and girls passed us. One little one was suspended in the air, to represent an angel. Two passed, carried along on a little platform, and were acting a part; in a third erection, borne on the shoulders of some men, a boy was lying on his back and a little girl

was supported on his upraised foot. I have forgotten to say that at an interval of every ten minutes a band of so-called music broke the stillness of the scene. Such music it was! In some cases the instruments were played by little boys dressed in beautifully embroidered long coats; in some, men played wind instruments; in others, a deafening, most unmusical sound was made by men striking gongs, which were carried along on a species of truck slung on poles.

These were followed by men with most noisy instruments, which they played by striking them together; others played on screeching pipes, and horns. Certainly the Chinese are lovers of noisy music. Every now and again the procession was broken by little portable tables, bearing sweetmeats, tea, and other refreshments, which, upon the cavalcade halting for a minute or so, were served out to the members of the procession. I saw many delicacies popped into the mouths of the little heroes and heroines as they passed by. Pavilions decorated with figures inlaid with kingfisher's feathers, contained precious stones, beautiful vases in jadestone, or old bronzes in charming forms, which were lent by the gentry to do honour to Paak-tai's procession. You would have been amused had you seen the fat men who graced the occasion, clad in brilliant yellow silk. The upper

part of the garment is worn over one shoulder only, the other shoulder is unadorned. At last came three large carved black wood pavilions, the first and second containing small idols of Paak-tai's father and mother. The third pavilion was preceded by musicians, and by citizens of respectability, wearing long coats of silk with squares of embroidery on the chest and shoulders. This pavilion contained the idol of Paak-tai, and, as it advanced, the people chin-chinned it, that is to say, they put their hands together in the attitude of prayer and bowed again and again towards the image. No greater act of idolatry than this could be witnessed. The shopkeepers show their devotion to the idol by raising their offerings from the small altars erected for the occasion in the doorways of their shops, and presenting them to the idol. Sometimes they pour out libations as the image passes by. In all Chinese temples there is a second idol of the presiding god made in a small portable size, to be used on these festive occasions. Immediately the procession had passed, a great number of fire-crackers were let off to frighten away all evil spirits from the neighbourhood. The crowd, who had been most good-natured all the while, and had only occasionally broken in upon the procession, now began to disperse. The police had

switches made of rattan in their hands ; they were stockingless and very shabby. Their hats, which are in this shape, have red silk fringes hanging from the pointed crowns. We waited until the



HAT WORN BY CHINESE POLICEMEN.

streets were clear of the crowd, and then went into several shops to see the industries. The flour mills were most interesting to me. The old double millstones placed one above the other are used, and they are kept in motion by oxen. These oxen are blindfolded to prevent them suffering from giddiness. We then went on by boat to Honam to see the fine Ocean Banner Monastery. It is the best preserved and most interesting Buddhist monastery in the city. Henry was most warmly welcomed by the monks, and we were invited to have a cup of tea with them. Henry knows every corner of the monastery, and at one time studied in one of the rooms, which was given up to him for his use by the monks. I must attempt a feeble description of this fine monastery. It, like all others, has a large shrine with idols of the three

Buddhas, colossal in size, in a sitting position. They are carved in wood and gilded; down the side of the shrine are sixteen idols, representing the most distinguished disciples of Buddha, each having an incense jar before it. Chains hang from the roof supporting lights, which are always burning before the three Buddhas. Three large altars stand before them, which are richly carved and gilded, and on them are placed immense jars made in zinc, some holding artificial flowers, others incense. Another shrine, under a separate roof, contains a relic of Buddha, over which is placed a magnificent dagoba of sculptured marble. A third shrine contains a large idol of Koon-Yam, the goddess of mercy. We were present at the evening prayers. The monks, both here and in the other monasteries in Canton, show their great respect for Henry by allowing him to stand inside the shrines at the hour of service. The same privilege was extended to me, and so I had an opportunity, which I otherwise should not have had, of narrowly observing the ritual and ceremonies of the Buddhists' evensong. No Chinese are admitted; they stand outside and watch the service through the open gates of the shrine. There were about thirty priests present, wearing grey cotton cowls; and long yellow squares of silk made in many pieces to represent the robe of

poverty, were worn over their shoulders. By the light of the lamps this robe looks very sacerdotal; and the shaven heads of the priests, together with their devotional mien and attitude of prayer, make them resemble monks of Catholic countries. Two of the monks only stood at the altar before the future Buddha (the present Buddha is considered too sacred to offer him worship excepting through a mediator); one of these priests beat a tom-tom to regulate the chanting, the other struck a concave gong. Many of the priests knelt at each side of the shrine arranged before the idols of the disciples of Buddha, who are worshipped as intercessors. The monks at given times performed the kau-tau, that is, they bent their foreheads to the ground, and joined their hands, turning the palms upwards as their heads rose from the floor. This kau-tau was performed by all the monks simultaneously, with perfect gravity and solemnity. The chanting, which was conducted in different keys, lasted about half an hour. Then the officiating monk walked slowly to the front of the altar, but making a slight détour, as no one is considered holy enough to approach direct even to the future Buddha. He now took a small bronze cup in his hand with rice in it, elevated it three times, then walked backwards to his kneeling-mat in the

centre, at some distance from the altar, prostrated himself, passed his hand over the vessel as if in the act of consecrating the rice, and on rising placed it on a small table outside the shrine for the birds of the air. We were standing immediately behind him, and could see most clearly all he did. We then returned to a bench where we had sat during the chanting, and witnessed the procession of monks pass three times round the shrine. They walked with hands joined in the attitude of prayer, eyes cast down, and in single file, repeating in plain-chant "O-mi-to-fat," the name of the future Buddha, or mediator. Immediately before the procession started, the officiating monk had performed the kau-tau to the other priests, and all turning to the north, had prostrated themselves, and worshipped heaven. This service takes place daily, in the morning and evening. The greatest decorum and reverence had been observed by the monks. Each priest had his place assigned to him; he knelt on the floor, his body upright, and his hands placed together. The language used in the service is the Pali, and many of the monks only learn the service by rote, not understanding a word of it. We went afterwards to see a large private house belonging to one of the richest and first families in Canton, of the name of 'Ng. We met the

head of the family in the garden ; he sprang forward, when he saw Henry, exclaiming, "Iyah, you come back from England, my heart too muchee likee see you." He took us into his private rooms, and to the room of mourning, where there was a picture of his wife, who had died three or four months before. An altar was arranged in front of it. The walls of the room were hung with banners of cloth, red and purple in colour, on which were large characters expressing sympathy to the bereaved. This Chinese gentleman had evidently loved his wife, and often said to Henry, who had known her, "Oh, my wife have die, my wife have die, my heart too muchee sorry." He had had only one wife, and says he does not mean to marry again. He showed us with much pride his private sitting-room, furnished in the European style. Yesterday we had a wonderful day's sightseeing. Henry's old college friend still being with us, there is even an extra inducement to go about the city. Amongst the temples we visited was one in which was a shrine for disconsolate women. Those who have bad husbands take pieces of paper cut out in the form of men and stick them on to the altar, praying that the goddess may give them back the love of their husbands ; sometimes you see the small

effigies with the feet uppermost, meaning that the heart is in the wrong place and requires turning. Women who have children prone to take diseases, or who are troublesome, take paper effigies of them with the names of the children written on them. These papers are not more than five or six inches in length, and they are placed with the heads of the effigies hanging down, the mothers thus asking the goddess, who is supposed to have the power, to move the hearts of the children into the right position, so that they may become fortunate or good. The same is the case with female slaves who have unkind mistresses. We saw the Temple of the Goddess of Women and Children, and paid a second visit to the large Five Hundred Disciples' Temple, where we were regaled with tea and sweetmeats by the monks. The abbot died a few days ago, so the monk who received us, being in deep mourning, did not sit down with us, but deputed a friend to do the honours. Two of the young priests, who were pupils of the lately departed abbot, wore as a sign of mourning white dresses with white bands round their waists. We saw the coffin of the abbot with a light burning under it, to induce one of the three souls (which every man is supposed to possess) to remain with the body. We returned home very tired with our day's

sightseeing, but with memories full of all the interesting sights we had seen, and I was eager to go into the city again to continue my exploration of it.

LETTER V.

CANTON, April 22nd, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

THE day after I sent my letter to you, we made up our minds to devote the whole afternoon to visiting the charitable institutions of the city, viz., the Retreat for Poor Old Women, a similar Retreat for Old Men, the Blind Asylum, and the Foundling Hospital. In the Retreats for Aged Men and Women, each person is given a small house to live in, and these houses are built in long rows. The pittance these poor people receive from Government is very small, and as soon as they see a stranger they hold out their baskets, calling out "kumshaw, kumshaw." No one is supposed to reside in these alms-houses who is under sixty years of age; but, as relations and friends of the old people find it convenient to pay them long visits, we saw numbers of young women and children living in these charitable institutions. Several of the old people were over eighty years of age. I was much struck

with one room we visited; its occupant was very aged, and in a corner, exposed to view, there was a coffin ready for the old man. It had evidently been a birthday gift* to him from some relation, and it made his mind easy to know that he would not be wanting this much-prized covering when he died. The Chinese consider that one of the three souls animating a human body accompanies it to the grave, and is made happy when the body which it inhabited is enclosed in a coffin.

In the Asylum for Old Women we met with many small-footed women, and Henry was determined I should see one of these poor deformed feet unbandaged. An old woman, who heard what we required, said she would, if we gave her a kumshaw, take us to a house where a young woman, who had unusually small feet, was on a visit to its aged inmate. When we arrived at the door, we were surrounded by a crowd of old women. They knocked at the door and desired the young woman to speak to us. When she was told our errand, she looked very shy, and said that she could not unbandage her foot. We showed her a five-cent piece, and she then consented to let "Nai-nai" go with her into her room,

* It is not unusual for Chinese to present their aged parents and aged relations with coffins as birthday gifts.

and to let me see her foot. But our friend, who much wished also to see it, attempted to accompany me, upon which the young woman refused to remove the bandages. So we were obliged to leave the house. In the meantime the old women had placed a form for us outside the door, and they were most energetic in their endeavours to persuade the young woman to comply with our request. In order to overcome her scruples, Henry told her that he and our friend were both old men, he with his white hair, and his friend wearing a long beard. They meant no harm, he added. The old women used these arguments secondhand with great vehemence. At last a string of one hundred cash, in value about five pence, was added to the first offer, and it was all put into the hand of the young woman. This temptation proved too strong for her to resist any longer, and she sat down upon the bench, removed her tiny embroidered shoe, and unrolled the bandage. This bandage takes the place of a stocking with all Chinese women who have contracted feet, and in the case of ladies it is made in bright-coloured wide ribbon. The maimed foot was a sad sight, utterly deformed. The toes were crushed under the sole of the foot, reaching to the under part of the big toe. They were sore and slightly bleeding, and the sole of the foot

upon which they were crushed was also raw. The toes (excepting the large toe) were not visible on the front of the foot. The heel was so much squeezed that it was square in shape, and ended in a hard ridge of flesh. I saw a deep division between it and the sole. The crushed feet seldom heal, and from the young woman's manner I am sure it hurt her much when she touched her foot. Yet the bandage must be removed daily in order to wash the foot, else it would become most offensive. Nothing I have read or heard of the compression of the feet of Chinese females, made me fully realise how sad the custom is, until I saw this young woman's foot.

The bandaging does not commence until the little girl is four or five years of age. The feet are then bound with a strip of calico. This is tightened by degrees until, after some years' suffering, the poor feet are crushed into the desired shape. It is very distressing, they say, to hear the screams of a little child when the bandages are being removed, or when they are being drawn tighter. The ankle becomes a straight bone, and the leg loses all shape, and resembles a stilt. A Chinese lady looks elegant until she moves, when she loses all grace to our eyes (not, though, to the Chinese, who consider the gait of a small-footed woman most elegant), as she hobbles

about, supporting herself on the arm of her attendant.

From this Refuge for Old Women we went on to the Foundling Hospital, where a most sad spectacle presented itself to our eyes. This building is very dark and dreary, and the little ones told a sad tale of neglect with their starved, pinched faces. Many of them looked like little shrivelled-up monkeys. These poor unfortunate infants are all girls, sent to the asylum by fathers disappointed of their hope of having sons, and not caring for the expense and trouble of bringing up these poor, uncared-for female children. The little things are parted from their mothers often when only a few hours old, and in this hospital as many as three are often given to one woman to be nourished by her. The greater number soon die, and one must look upon them as the more fortunate children, as those who live are sold for slaves, or are brought up to a life worse than slavery. I saw one little baby, perhaps a month old, which had a fearful cough, like an old man's asthmatic cough. The woman to whose care it was entrusted said it was an unfortunate little thing, and from her manner you could see she considered that it was not worth notice, being under the displeasure of the gods, and so doomed to die early. Babies are considered unlucky when they

die young, and are buried without form or ceremony ; in fact, sometimes they are wrapped up in matting and thrown into the river. From all accounts it seems to be too true that the custom of killing female children is still practised, particularly in those districts occupied by the Hakkas.

The other day, when we had our luncheon at the farmhouse in a valley beyond the White Cloud Mountains, we noticed that all the children, and there were many round us, were boys, and we asked each other the question, Where are the female children? This village I speak of is inhabited by Hakkas. Every now and then a kind of mission, under the auspices of the Chinese literati, is preached against infanticide. In the heart of the city there is a square called Pi-ai-ting, and in this square sermons are preached daily on this and other subjects. When we were in it a few days since, we saw a large illustrated paper posted against the wall. There were about eight pictures representing a wicked woman guilty of infanticide. In one illustration the attendant was preparing a wine bath in which to drown the female child, the mother being present. In the second the mother was dropping her child into this bath. In others the mother appeared before the god of Hades to be punished, and the last

representation showed you a serpent, with a baby's head, rising to devour the guilty woman.

We found the Asylum for the Blind a sadly neglected place, and the charity much abused. We were struck by observing that a large number of the inmates had the full use of their eyesight, and on inquiry we found these were friends and relations of the blind, who live with them and share the profits gained by begging. The blind are not well cared for, as they are supposed to be under the displeasure of the gods, or suffering from sins committed in another stage of existence. And now, having seen all we had planned to see, we returned home.

On Friday last we made rather a perilous excursion down the river as far as the Lin-Fā-Shan Pagoda, which is about twenty-four miles from Canton. Knowing that we had a long day's work before us, we started from home at half-past six A.M. A slipperboat was in readiness to take us. As I have not told you what these boats are like, I will try to do so now. They are in the exact form of a slipper, and the passengers sit as it were on the instep under the mat covering by which this part of the boat is enclosed. Three men stand in the heel, as it were, of the slipper, a fourth sits down and assists in propelling one of the oars. They can send these boats very quickly through the water.

Henry, our friend, myself and our old coolie, sat upon the floor of the boat, and I found in this, my second experience of a slipper boat, the position very cramped, the movement of the boat rolling, producing in me a feeling of sea-sickness, and I felt altogether uneasy in it. We passed Whampoa, which was about halfway to the place of our destination, and as I went along I was much interested in all the river craft and in the sights along the banks of the river. When we were within an hour of our journey's end, the river became very rough, and I felt thoroughly sea-sick, nervous, and miserable. We landed about one o'clock and found ourselves at some considerable distance from the pagoda, with a good hill to climb between it and ourselves. We first had to walk in single file along a narrow, muddy path between some large ponds, then to climb by a small waterfall over some very rough ground. After this, we had to find our way between some patches of cultivated land, and a hillside covered with small mounds, which I discovered were tombs. A burial-place in the south of China is never surrounded by walls, and graves are placed in all directions upon the sides of hills. There were a few granite tombs, but the far larger number were merely little hillocks of earth. We arrived at the nine

storied pagoda at last, and immediately began its ascent. This pagoda is very ancient, and the stone staircase very much broken ; but, with perseverance, we mounted eight of its storeys. We found that the ninth storey was blocked up in consequence of its dilapidated state. The view became more and more extensive and more beautiful as we mounted higher and higher. The wind was very high, too much so for my comfort. I wanted both hands to help me to scramble up the broken staircase, the stones giving way, and rattling down as we tried to stand upon them ; but the wind was so strong, especially when we came to the openings in the wall, that I was obliged to hold on my hat, which occasionally lifted itself from my head in a very suspicious manner. The pagoda is made of brick and is about five hundred years old. The descent was very tiresome, and I sometimes required the assistance of my two companions.

On leaving the pagoda we went into the City of Refuge, which is close by. It is merely a large space shut in by a thick wall, having a path along the top of it. This place is intended for, and has been used as, a place of refuge for women and children of the neighbouring villages, when attacked by pirates or other enemies. The cattle are then driven up here, and the place is defended

by the men belonging to the villages attacked. We afterwards went to see some very extensive caverns about a mile from this walled enclosure. They are said to be natural caverns, but Henry looks upon them as artificially made, probably by the Buddhist monks as places for solitude and abstraction. He has seen similar, but incomparably finer, caverns in India. The ferns growing around and over the caverns we were visiting were lovely, and some of the fronds were of gigantic size. After we had enjoyed a three hours' ramble on shore we returned to our slipper boat and commenced our homeward journey. The wind was now in our favour, so the boatmen hoisted a sail, and rested a little time from their labours. We made slow progress, however, and it was long before we came to another object of interest, the Temple of Hung-Sing-Wong, the god of the Southern Ocean.

It is a very fine large temple, and is the only State temple of this god. Many emperors of China, on ascending the throne, have sent ambassadors from Peking to this temple to offer worship in their names to this idol, and this at a considerable cost. The prayers offered on these occasions have been engraved on black marble slabs, which have been placed in the corridor enclosing the large quadrangle.

There is a black idol in this temple, much thought of and much worshipped. No one can say what personage it is intended to represent; some think it is in memory of a Buddhist missionary from India; others, in memory of a black sailor who was cast on shore at this spot. The Buddhist missionary is said to have died suddenly in an upright position while standing at the gate of the temple, and the Chinese therefore consider that he was translated without dying to Elysium. The country is very pretty in the neighbourhood of this temple, and from a small hill close to it, called Polo-shan, we saw a most lovely sunset.

On taking our seats again in our small boat, we hoisted sail, and made our way slowly through the darkness, which now set in, to Whampoa. We did not reach this place until a quarter to nine P.M. After waiting half an hour there for Henry, who had some arrangements to make about the Sunday evening services, we started for home. We were feeling very tired by this time, and our friend kindly volunteered to sing to us. After listening to several songs I became drowsy, and was obliged to confess, on cross-examination, that I had not heard some half dozen of them. It was now lightning and thundering, but there were bright spots in the sky between the heavy clouds.

Suddenly the whole heavens became overcast with a blackness that one could feel. As our friend was in the middle of a song, I did not like to interrupt him by drawing attention to the sudden alarming change in the sky. But in a few seconds, before the song had come to an end, the squall was upon us. The first burst of it was tremendous, and the boatmen were alarmed and began to talk in a loud and high key. Fortunately our sail was down, though the little mast was still up. One of the boatmen climbed like a monkey over the top of the boat to take it down; the others took a long bamboo pole out of the boat, and most fortunately were able to drive it into the ground, and so tie our boat to it. The rush of wind was fearful, and it seemed to me that our boat must be capsized by it. It shook it as a cat shakes a rat she has between her teeth. Then down came a tremendous rain such as you can only have in the tropics; this was accompanied by most vivid lightning and heavy thunder. The boatmen drew a covering over their heads, and made things as water-tight as possible, but a great deal of wet leaked in upon us. I was terrified when the storm of wind burst, for I had never experienced such a sudden squall before. We remained at anchor for nearly an hour, and as the storm was then over, we pursued our weary way, making

slow progress, as our boatmen were now worn out with their long day's work. We were about half-way from Whampoa to Canton when the storm surprised us, so we had six miles or more to pull before we could reach our destination. I thought the men must give in and fall asleep, they were so wearied. At a foot's pace we crawled on through never-ending mud-banks, and at length, at four o'clock A.M., arrived at our landing-stage. I wonder if the tortoise felt as tired when he reached the goal as we did when we landed at Shameen.

Seven long hours had elapsed since we left Whampoa. All our servants came out on the bund to meet us, and inquired "Allo men well?" I asked our compradore what they meant, and he said, "We allo fear, very big wind, too muchee fear that largee wind have broke that boat, and allo men have die."

The boat-people about Shameen had been much terrified by the squall, Māk said, and had called upon their gods to save them. This is a treacherous river with very strong currents, and at this time of year, especially, the tides are very high. The following day Henry called upon the captain of a steamer anchored opposite our house, and also went on board a gunboat. The officers of both vessels said that it had been a very heavy gale, and were surprised to hear

we had been out in it. Providentially we happened to be at the side of the river, and in shallow water, when the squall burst upon us; had we been in the centre of the river our boat must have been capsized.

LETTER VI.

CANTON, April 28th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I HAVE been very fortunate since I last wrote to you, in being able to see a funereal ceremony in one of the houses belonging to a Chinese gentleman. He is a friend of Henry's, and as we saw the usual emblems of mourning at the door of the house, Henry took me in, glad of the opportunity of showing me the ceremony, which he knew would then be going on. We entered a large hall, at the end of which stood the coffin of the deceased, who proved to be an aunt of the master of the house. In front of it an altar had been placed, on which offerings of various kinds, candles, and incense burners were arranged. A large coloured portrait of the deceased lady hung on the wall behind. By the side of the altar life-size figures made in paper, representing attendants, were placed;

various paper representations, such as sedan chairs of ordinary size, fans, dresses, and boxes, were placed about the hall, ready to be burnt as offerings. These superstitious people believe that by the action of fire the spirit of the thing represented passes into Elysium, and is then at the service of the soul of the deceased. Many coloured banners presented by friends of the family, containing words complimentary to the deceased, covered the walls. A pretty young lady now came forward from the interior of the house, dressed in plain cotton mourning garments. The Chinese etiquette is most strict on this point, no silk garments and no rouge (which ordinarily is worn to the greatest degree by the ladies) is allowed during the prescribed period of mourning. The young lady was a daughter-in-law of the deceased. It is difficult to convey to your mind the number of people contained in a Chinese gentleman's house; a whole clan lives together, each male member of the clan bringing his bride home to his ancestral house. The young lady and her sister, who had joined her—both small-footed women—now put on white sackcloth cloaks and hoods, the latter completely covering their faces, and began, after prostrating themselves, to wail the dead. It was a curious sight to see these two, who had up to

the moment of covering themselves with the mourning cloaks, laughed and chatted with one another, suddenly throw themselves on the ground and howl and moan, their heads swaying about to the cadence of their wailing. One felt the whole scene was unreal, merely a necessary piece of ceremonial. The husband of the young lady who first came in, a fine young man also dressed in white, with a pipe in his mouth, walked up and down, and acted as master of the ceremonies. After the two ladies had wailed piteously to all appearance for five minutes, the young man gave the signal for them to cease. They rose immediately and at once took off their mourning outer garb. We went into a very pretty, quaint garden at the back of the house, in which was the invariable pond with a bridge over it. We now left the house and went on to the temple, called by the Chinese, "Ten Thousand Years Palace," but known to Europeans by the name of the Emperor's Temple.

We passed through a massive granite arch, and saw the lofty roof of the temple covered with yellow tiles, which denotes that it is a State endowment. We then went through two courtyards into a quadrangle enclosed by cloisters. Immediately opposite the large entrance gates stands the great shrine, containing the tablet of the

emperor. In the centre of the paved pathway, and also on the steps leading immediately to the shrine, I saw two or three figures of dragons, and a representation of the sun engraved on the stone pavement. No person, it is supposed, will be sacrilegious enough to tread on these sacred emblems, and therefore no one will dare to walk straight towards the throne of majesty, on which the imperial tablet rests. The shrine is enclosed by red-stained walls, and the roof is covered by yellow tiles. On entering the shrine we saw a facsimile of the dragon throne at Pekin. It is most elaborately carved and gilded, and is approached by nine steps. The imperial tablet is in red, on which in letters of gold is the following inscription, "May the Emperor reign ten thousand years, ten thousand times ten thousand years." An altar stands in front of the throne, on each side of which are arranged the insignia of royalty. At the end of the second quadrangle of this temple stands a shrine similar to the one we had just left, which is erected in honour of the empress. In it is a tablet bearing this inscription, "May the Empress live one thousand years, one thousand times one thousand years." All the mandarins, both civil and military, worship in this temple on the first day of the year, and on the birthdays of the emperor and empress. Here

they prostrate themselves and weep when an emperor or empress dies. All officials who may have occasion to pass this temple must alight from their horses, or sedan chairs, and walk past its gates as a mark of reverence to their imperial majesties.

I was much amused at seeing innumerable cakes of white wax which were lying on the floor of the second shrine; some hundreds of these cakes looking like white cheeses were there. It is a costly gift annually presented by the wax merchants of Canton to the emperor. One hundred and ten piculs constitute the quantity, and each picul was, Henry says, in 1873, worth eighty dollars. This insect wax comes from the province of Szechuen, but when it arrives at Canton it is not quite white. Therefore the cakes are broken up into little pieces, placed in sieves, standing on white metal vessels. They are placed in caldrons of boiling water, and the pieces of wax as they melt fall through the sieves into these vessels. When congealed, the wax is made into cakes and exposed to the sun. It certainly was dazzlingly white when we saw it ready for packing.

On our way to this temple we visited a large hall belonging to the Tea Guild.* In its garden, which I found most interesting, is the original

* The Guild of the Green Tea Merchants.

quaint bridge and scenery, from which the willow pattern (or rather that part of it which is not mythological) was taken. The truth was, that a young lady eloped with a neighbour from this garden. The angry father and gardener are represented in the willow pattern on this bridge pursuing the runaway couple. No Chinese story, however, would be considered interesting without a dash of the marvellous, and therefore they proceed to say that, as the angry father was in the act of catching the runaway couple, the goddess of marriage interposed, and metamorphosed them into a pair of turtle doves. This episode, Henry says, is a favourite subject on the Chinese stage. I very much admired the curious small gateways and windows I saw in this garden; some were in the form of leaves and others in the form of fruits and flowers. After leaving this guild we went over a lacquer-ware factory, and watched the different processes of painting, colouring, etc.

I have forgotten to tell you of one incident of our day's excursion. Before we reached the imperial temple, we arrived at a small turning, as it appeared to be, and Henry came to my chair and asked me to alight. I walked with him on to a narrow, long strip of ground, on which various pieces of pottery were lying about. Its name, from the supposed similarity of shape, is Horse's

Head. When asked to guess where I was, I failed to give an answer. I was then told I was standing on the execution ground. Before I knew this, however, a nice-looking young man came forward from one of the small neighbouring houses, where his wife, child, and mother were standing on the doorstep. Imagine my amazement when Henry told me this was one of the four executioners employed by the authorities. When asked how many heads had fallen to his sword already, he replied one hundred and seventy, and said that on the day following there was to be an execution on a large scale, in which he hoped to have a share. We heard that forty pirates were to be decapitated. Our friend, who was with us, arranged at once to be present. I saw the crosses on which the men are tied who are condemned to be strangled, or to be cut into pieces, also some large earthenware vessels containing the heads of several malefactors who had been decapitated a few days previous to our visit. I trust that I may never meet a procession on its way to this place teeming with horrors.

The unfortunate criminals are pinioned tightly, are then placed in baskets, and superscriptions, fastened to strips of bamboo, are placed behind their necks, stating their names, their crimes, and their punishments; in this way they are

carried to the execution ground. After all I had heard of the wholesale executions in China, the smallness of the ground, and its unprepared state when we visited it, struck me very much. On quitting this field of blood, we passed through the street called Wing-Ts'ing-Kai, celebrated as the place where the French put to death ninety-six persons, men, women, and children, when the city was occupied by the armies of Great Britain and France. This was to avenge the death of a cook from a French man-of-war, who had been assassinated by some Chinese in a provision shop in this street.

We proceeded from the lacquer-ware factory (where I broke off from my narrative) to the Examination Hall, a place used once in three years for the examination of those who have already taken their B.A. degree, but who are anxious to obtain the higher degree of Kué-Yan, or M.A. The number is very great of those who assemble in this hall for this purpose, frequently exceeding 12,000 or 13,000. Out of this large number of candidates possibly not more than 120 can obtain the degree, as the number is limited by law in each province. It seems to correspond to the patient nature of a Chinese, that a man should try again and again for his degree under such difficult circumstances. The hall consists of a large

quadrangle; branching from each side of it are several long rows or streets of cells, each cell being five feet six inches in length, and not more than three feet eight inches wide. They are open in front; each cell is provided, during the examination, with a bed, which simply consists of seven or eight narrow deal boards. Some of these boards removed from their place by day serve the candidate for a table, and those remaining in their grooves are used by him as a seat. These streets of cells are named by characters from the "One Thousand Character Classic" and each cell is numbered, so the examiners have no difficulty in summoning any particular candidate from his cell.

In the centre of the quadrangle stands a pavilion, made in the form of a triple gateway, to which the name of Watch Tower is applied. The two examiners for each province are despatched from Peking and are received in the provincial capitals with great honours. The candidates enter the hall according to their counties (at least those who can get in, for the crush is so great that some do not succeed in pushing in until a late hour), at the early hour of four A.M., and have to answer to their names at the second and also the third gates of the hall. Before they enter the latter gate they are provided

with sheets of paper on which to write essays and poems. The candidates have previously paid for their paper at the temple of Kwan-tai, the god of war. At the third gate of the Examination Hall they are searched, to ascertain whether they have provided themselves with "cribs" in the form of small pocket editions of the classics.

A cook and a waiter are allotted to each ten candidates, and they are pledged to hold no communication with them. During the early part of the examination, the candidates, who vary in age from eighteen to eighty, remain three days in their cells, and are engaged in writing essays and poems. The successful candidates in this first examination go in again for another term of three days, when they have to write five essays from themes selected from the five classics. Those successful in this second examination have yet to go in for another and final examination, which consists of five papers on any subjects chosen by the examiners. Out of those who have thus passed through three times three days of hard examination only 120, as I have already stated, may be chosen. I have forgotten to mention that the emperor provides for each candidate, during his stay in the Examination Hall, the food following:—four taels of pork, four taels of ham, six taels of salt fish, congee water, four moon cakes

a quantity of rice, a preserved egg, and a modicum of pickled vegetables. Those who obtain their M.A. degree wear a dress peculiar to the degree, and a gilded ornament on the top of their hats, and are invited to dine with the governor of the province, when the examination is over.

They are presented to the chief officials at the banquet, and then are required to perform the *kau-tau* before the imperial tablet. They are afterwards escorted through the streets by their friends. Their names are published throughout the province of which they are natives. The last act of the scene is a *douceur* given by the newly made Masters of Arts to the examiners. I am afraid I shall weary you with our long day's proceedings. As our friend was with us we were most anxious for him to see all that was possible for him to see during his visit. So, weary as we began to feel, we went on to the "City of the Dead," one of the strangest and most unique places I have ever visited. The two gentlemen were on foot all day. I was in a chair, as I could not do such a day's sightseeing with the additional fatigue of walking long distances. The "City of the Dead," (so foreigners style these places containing the dead) was at some distance from the Examination Hall and very far from Shameen. It is very difficult to convey to you any idea of this

strange, silent city laid out in streets, and on each side of which are rows of small one-storied houses built in stone. I think the only simile I can draw is that of rows of small almshouses. Imagine the death-like stillness that prevails in this place, where each house is occupied only by the dead. In most cases the room containing the large wooden coffin is divided into two. The first division contains an altar, which has in many cases a light burning over it, and effigies in paper, life size, or nearly so, of male and female attendants, standing by it. There are paper flowers often on the altar; the decorations vary much, according to the rank of the deceased. I saw, in some cases, outside the doors red boards and insignia of rank. In the middle of the inner division of the room is the large uncovered coffin with the foot of it towards the door. On entering one of these houses of the dead, our friend inadvertently touched one of the paper effigies, which represented a female attendant; she fell into our friend's arms and her neck became dislocated. We could not forbear a smile even in these grim surroundings. As all cannot afford to pay a sufficient sum for their relations to have a room to themselves in this temporary resting-place, you see four or more coffins in some of the rooms. In one large room I

noticed as many as twelve coffins. The doors of the houses are folding doors and can be pushed open easily. We entered many of them, as we passed down street after street. This large city of the dead has 194 houses in it. The dead only remain here for a time. The relations consult the geomancers as to a lucky spot for interment, and sometimes these soothsayers take a long time before they give an answer. Whilst therefore the relations wait to be assured of a lucky spot for burying their lost ones (a point much thought of by the Chinese, who are most superstitiously anxious to avoid all cause of offence towards the dead), they place them in these receptacles, and pay so much a month for the resting-place. Sometimes a delay in interment must take place in the case of those who die at a distance from their homes. It is imperatively necessary for a man to be gathered to his own after death, for the purpose of ancestral worship; should he be buried away from home, his spirit, unhappy and dissatisfied at being deprived of the homage of his descendants, might rove about seeking to injure the living to the utmost of its power. At the entrance of this City of the Dead is a very large piece of water surrounded by trees, inhabited by hundreds and hundreds of storks. These birds are considered sacred in China. The sombre water with its deep shades, and these

birds uttering their dismal note, form a fitting entrance to a place devoted to such a purpose as this City of the Dead. The only living beings here are a few Buddhist monks, whose duty it is to receive the dead who are brought here, and to pray for the repose of their souls. One is startled to see a white cock run out of one or other of these houses of the dead; but I learned from Henry that this proceeds also from a gross superstition. The white cock is supposed to attract the soul of the dead by its crowing, and thus to prevent the spirit wandering away from the body.*

My chair coolies seemed to be much relieved when it was suggested that we should return home by boat. As my two companions had walked and stood about for many hours, they did not feel equal to the five miles' walk home, so we made our way to the banks of the river, hired a sampan, and after very slow progress, in consequence of the strong tide being against us, arrived home after eight o'clock P.M., tired and more than ready for our dinner.

* As I have previously observed, the Chinese believe that each human body is animated by three souls: the first of which is supposed to remain with a tablet bearing the name of the deceased, placed in the ancestral temple; the second to remain with the corpse; and the third to go to Elysium.

LETTER VII.

CANTON, May 4th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I THINK you will be somewhat surprised to hear that we have had a small séance in the Chaplaincy, given by a Chinese spiritualist. He called upon us, and asked to be allowed to give a performance at our house. We inquired his terms, and found that he expected five dollars for an evening's entertainment. This we thought too much to give, as we did not know the man's capabilities; but, on talking it over with this fine gentlemanly Chinese, he proposed to give one of his wonders for a dollar. On our assenting, he requested that a large round table should be brought from the servants' room, and this was then placed feet upwards on a small basin of water. Four of our servants were now called in, and each was told to place one of his hands on a foot of the table. The performer then began to walk round and round the table, first with slow and measured step, lighted joss-sticks in his hands, and his lips employed in using words of incantation. After about four minutes' delay, the table began to

turn slowly, but on the performer quickening his step, it increased its speed, until both table and performer were running round and round. The incantation was continued the whole time in an undertone. It was a strange sight, and one not to be accounted for. There was no connection of hands on the part of the four servants, and one of the latter turned literally green from fright as the table whirled round and round. When the performer, out of breath, stood still, the table also rested from its labours. We asked him how he had accomplished this feat, and in a subdued voice he answered, "It is Joss (God) that does it, I pray to him." He wished much to show us how he could call up the spirits of the departed and make them answer him. This table-turning, clairvoyancy, spirit communion, etc., have been practised in China for many centuries past. When the performer had left we asked our coolie, who had looked so scared, what he thought of the table-turning, and he said, "belong Joss pigeon, my no savez what Joss."

We were not able to start for our sight-seeing yesterday until late, as the rain was coming down in torrents. It is now the rainy season, and everything is damp. Our marble-paved hall looks as if buckets of water had been thrown over it, and we are obliged to keep a

fire night and day in the library for the sake of Henry's books.

You will be amused to hear that we have a coolie whose duty is simply to rub the books to prevent the damp from spoiling them, and to see that white ants are not attacking them. He is supposed to take down a certain number of books daily, and to rub each in turn. He is such a curious-looking old fellow, and works deliberately with long pauses, and an occasional whiff of a pipe to lighten, I suppose, his arduous duties. Of course he is related to our chief servant. You will find in all houses that the compradore surrounds himself with his relations. The old man of whom I speak is Māk's uncle, our second waiting-boy is Māk's son, and one of our coolies is Māk's cousin. The whole arrangement of domestic concerns in China is curious. You pay so much, say seven or eight dollars, to your boys, so many dollars monthly to your coolies. But this in its entirety is not enjoyed by them. Each must pay a kumshaw, probably of a dollar a month, to the compradore; and again, if a boy or coolie recommends his friend to you and you engage him, the latter has to give to the former a kumshaw of at least half-a-dollar, possibly a dollar a month, all the time he remains in your service. This custom is very

much against the European householders. The same system of kumshaw is practised from the highest to the lowest in the empire. Should you go to a shop recommended you by your servant, he receives a *douceur* proportionate, I imagine, to what you buy. The chair coolies when hired from the streets by your *compradore* are squeezed by him. Again, the money used in China is a source of never-ending trouble to us foreigners. Henry writes a cheque for our monthly account with the outside *compradore* (provision dealer) and for other expenses. On this being presented to the *compradore* of the merchant on whom the cheque is drawn, this man gives the sum in light dollars. Our *compradore* receiving these, keeps them and pays the provision merchant, shopmen, etc., in still lighter dollars. So that there is constant contention on this subject. When we make a purchase, before the bargain is quite concluded, the man with whom we are treating will stipulate for "number one good dollars," "plover dollars," as he calls them. The whole system is iniquitous, but you must submit, there is no plan by which you can escape this robbery; the only thing you can do is to limit it as much as possible. I could scarcely forbear laughing when the provision dealer showed us the other day two or three dollars *Māk* had given him on our account.

Such things they were, very thin, with large pieces cut out of them. When Chinese bargain with each other, the men on both sides weigh the money, and you see most earnest faces bent on this employment, and a quarrel or wrangle ensues if the money is a fraction under weight. To make up for the clipped dollar, some dollars are chipped into pieces, and these fragments are put into the scale to make up the weight. No man trusts the other, and I have been most amused, when passing through the streets where food is sold, to see the purchaser take his own scales out and weigh the small portion of fish, fowl, or vegetable that he is buying, to be sure that he is not being cheated of a tithe of his rights.

This is a long digression from the subject of the sightseeing that we accomplished yesterday. On first starting, we were fortunate enough to see a marriage feast at the house of a Chinese gentleman. The bride had only just arrived at her future home. We were all allowed to go into an inner room to see her, as she and her female friends take no public part in the marriage feast. When we had entered the room, her two female attendants, who stood on each side of her, and assisted her to rise from her seat (this is strict Chinese etiquette, a bride not being expected to move by herself), lifted up the pearl and silk

fringe which hung over her face from the gay crown she wore on her head. This marriage crown has a most theatrical appearance, being made in gold tinsel and immensely ornamented with kingfisher's feathers and sham pearls. These crowns are not purchased for the bride, but are, with the marriage chair, which is a very gay affair, covered with gold and ornamented with innumerable little figures overlaid with kingfisher's feathers, hired for the occasion. The bride looked very shy, but this she is also by the rules of etiquette expected to assume, and she made us many low bows, her arms lifted up by her attendants to the level of her shoulders, her hands joined as she chin-chinned us. She was quite young, but not good-looking. She wore no rouge, this being forbidden to a bride on her marriage day. On a table standing close by her the wedding presents were displayed, lighted candles showing them to advantage. Some ladies, friends of the bride, who were standing near her, wore beautifully embroidered bright-coloured silk dresses. As we left the bride's apartment, and went into the large hall, we saw a number of men who were seated at the marriage feast. They all rose and received us most politely, offering us chairs. The bridegroom, who is a friend of Henry's, handed us tea and waited upon us. Another singular feature in

marriage ceremonies amongst the Chinese is this: the bride and bridegroom take the lowest position, and are servants to all on their wedding day. The young host asked Henry if he thought the bride was "good look see," and seemed much pleased with Henry's congratulations, given in true Chinese style. The bridegroom had unfortunately taken off the bright-coloured silk bands he had worn earlier in the day over his chest and shoulders. He most politely accompanied us to the outer door when we took leave.

Have I told you how very frightful the shaven heads of the Chinese men appear to me? You remember that Henry's Chinese servant who accompanied him to England wore a little black silk cap on his head. They do the same in cold weather in China, but now the warmer weather has begun they go without any covering to the head. There is often a piece of short, loose hair between the shaven part of the head and the tail, which when long enough will be plaited into the tail, but in its short state it rises from the head when the wind blows, and presents a most untidy, ludicrous appearance.

As I go along the streets my eyes are occupied incessantly with all the strange sights, and I like to tell you my first impressions of people and things in this far-off land. The babies amuse

me immensely. Baby boys have their heads wholly shaven, excepting on one spot at the back of the head, perhaps two inches wide; this is the nucleus for the future tail. When some months old the little boy may have a wee tail two inches long, which is as soon as possible plaited on to a little bit of red silk, and it stands stiff and upright from the head. The ordinary woman's dress strikes me as very inelegant; it is composed of a wide blue or prune-coloured cotton blouse edged with black, and very wide blue or prune-coloured cotton trousers. Sometimes the dress, etc., are made in dark-brown cotton. All this caught my eye as I was on the way in my chair from the bridegroom's house to the Examination Hall, where candidates are examined for their B.A. degree. It is very large, partly roofed over, an impluvium intersecting the large hall. Rows and rows of stone tables, with a bench in stone on one side of them, stand on each side of this open-air hall. On the end of each of these stone benches a Chinese character is carved, signifying some good attribute, such as goodness, brightness, etc. This hall is used for two years in succession for the examination of candidates for the B.A. degree. The third year it is closed, as the examination for the M.A. degree takes place then at the other Examination Hall, which

I have already described. The hall we were now visiting can hold 3400 candidates. It stands at the entrance of the yamun (or official residence) of the Literary Chancellor. When we left this hall we returned towards home and went into a Chinese restaurant, not far from Shameen, where a dinner in true Chinese style had been ordered by Henry. Our friend, whose visit was now drawing to a close, had expressed a great wish to have a dinner in one of the Chinese restaurants served in native style. The restaurant which we patronised is large and has many garden rooms, in one of which we could have dined most agreeably had it been earlier in the day, but it was now too late to think of this, so we went into one of the upper rooms of the house. Here Māk was waiting to receive us, and the table, which was round in shape, was already arranged for our dinner. The *coup d'œil* reminded me of my early days, when a child's feast was shared by young friends. In the centre of the table were placed many very small porcelain basins, containing a variety of fruits, preserved eggs, sliced pears, etc., all in miniature.

Immediately in front of each of us were four very small plates containing pepper, salt, soy, and sugar. Chopsticks, a porcelain spoon with a large bowl and a very short handle, a tiny porce-

lain wine cup, and a little two-pronged fork were placed before each guest. Henry asked Māk to sit down with us, as he could explain the dishes, customs, etc., to us. He behaved so well, only as a Chinaman of inferior rank can behave when in company of his superiors. He was neither shy nor forward.

As I intend to enclose a bill of fare in my letter, I will only tell you a few things about the dinner that most attracted my attention.

We began our repast by helping ourselves at our pleasure to the fruit, etc., from the centre of the table, eating according to Chinese form. You do not necessarily put what you take from the dishes or basins into your own little basin, but more generally eat what you have secured either by chopsticks or the fork at once. You can imagine how much I appreciated the little fork, as I could not use the chopsticks at all. I struggled and struggled, but what I took up with them fell on to the table before I could convey it to my mouth. And now courses of dishes were placed on the table by degrees, and as none were removed until the dinner was finished, we had an increasing circle of porcelain basins in the centre, and by the time that the feast came to an end there must have been between thirty and forty of these bowls on the table. Everything

was cooked to rags, and all of it was flavoured or accompanied by mushrooms, garlic, water-chestnuts, slices of bamboo shoots, etc. The dishes were put on the table in singular order to our ideas: sometimes a dish of a sweet flavour was followed by one containing boned duck, then came pork, boiled conch, etc. In the middle of the repast tea and little cakes were given us, and from this moment tea was supplied *ad libitum* until the end of the dinner. The tea was made in covered cups, out of which we drank; and when we wanted more of it, fresh tea-leaves, with boiling water poured on them, were put into fresh cups and handed to us. The china lid of the cup you have to partly withdraw when you drink, and it is useful for preventing the tea-leaves from going into your mouth.

The wine, which was put on the table at the beginning of the repast, was contained in little white metal tankards about six inches in height. Two kinds of wine, each most disagreeable to my taste, were given us: white wine made from rice, which tasted a little like weak whisky, and a red wine made from lichees. The wine was poured into tiny porcelain cups. At the end of the dinner three pretty-looking china bowls, bright green inside, were placed on the table, and I immediately became suspicious of what they contained.

Do you remember that Henry said he was determined that I should eat dog, cat, and rat very soon after my arrival in China? I had seen black cat's flesh when cooked at a cat and dog restaurant (about which I must tell you in another letter), and I thought I recognised it in one of these little basins before me. I proved to be right, and I could only be prevailed upon to put a little piece of the dog's flesh into my mouth; I could not touch the other two dishes. The dried rat was served up with peas. Cat is not a dish, as generally supposed in Europe, which can be frequently indulged in by the poor man; it can only be enjoyed by him as a very rare treat. A dinner of cat's flesh cannot be procured for less than a quarter of a dollar. Another delicacy had been ordered by Henry to grace the meal. Do you recollect that when he spoke of tipsy shrimps at a dinner party in England, one of our relations who was present told a friend afterwards it was but a traveller's tale? Henry was determined that I should verify his anecdote. So tipsy shrimps were placed on the table. They were brought on in a little covered china bowl, into which wine had been poured some short time before. When the cover was removed, the shrimps began to jump about and to spring out of the little basin on to the table. Had an experienced Chinaman been present he

would have caught them on his chopsticks as they were in the act of springing, but my companions were not able to do this. I could not put one of these live things into my mouth, but Henry took one, and as to our friend, I think, I may safely say he ate two or three. I never saw any one so determined to eat all and everything as our friend; he had helped himself previously to this, most liberally to cat, dog, and rat, and said he did not find them disagreeable. And now our dinner closed, as is the case at all Chinese repasts, with soups of various kinds. When we left the table I was much amused by seeing Māk and our other servants empty each of the numerous china basins standing on the table into a cloth, to convey the various contents home for their own use.

I have forgotten to mention that little squares of the ordinary whitey-brown Chinese paper, about six inches square, were given to us to use as table-napkins.

When we rose from table, hot water in brass bowls was placed before us, and small towels were provided for us on which to dry our hands. I did not think very much of the birds'-nest soup, which of course was one of the delicacies of which we had partaken; it is gelatinous, and has no flavour in particular that I could discover. It was served with pigeons' eggs and ham. It must,

I fancy, be very nutritious. The Malay name for it is "Foam of the Sea." I am to visit one of the shops where the nests are prepared for use and sold, and to see the great amount of care that has to be bestowed upon them before they are fit to be converted into food. The Malays believe that the birds swallow the foam, and eject it after it has undergone some change in their stomachs. I will now give you the bill of fare, which I wrote down as each dish was put on table.

In the centre of the table, in tiny dishes, were :

1. Oranges cut into small slices.
2. Pears cut into thin slices.
3. Bitter almonds.
4. Preserved walnuts.
5. Ducks' gizzards cut into small pieces.
6. Preserved eggs, green in colour, cut into small pieces.
7. Tiny square pieces of pork, very dark in colour, looking more like a sweetmeat than meat.

1. Minute plate with pepper in it.
2. " " " salt in it.
3. " " " sugar in it.
4. " " " soy in it.

Four of these small plates were placed before each person.

The first dish placed on table after all were seated was :

1. Etouffée de mer. (Sea slugs).

2. Stewed boned duck, served with forcemeat, so much cooked as to be easily divided by chopsticks.
 3. Hashed pigeon with ham.
 4. Birds'-nest soup.
 5. Stewed mutton and bamboo shoots.
 6. Boiled conch (a large shell-fish) cut into slices.
 7. Stewed crab.
 8. Black fish, fried.
-

A pause, in which tea and cakes of two kinds were handed.

- (1.) Cakes named "A Thousand Storeys."
- (2.) Sponge cakes about an inch and a half square.

During this interlude we helped ourselves from the various dishes already placed upon the table.

Now was served :

9. Fowl and ham, cooked until they could be divided by chopsticks.
10. Turtle soup with pieces of fat turtle floating in it, taken by porcelain spoons.
11. Hashed dog.
12. Stewed black cat.
13. Fried rat.
14. Macaroni soup.
15. Salt fish.
16. Salted eggs.
17. Pork minced so small as to represent bread crumbs.
18. Ham cut into small pieces and placed upon a green vegetable.
19. Basins of rice.

20. Congee (rice water).
21. Melon seeds.
22. Betel-nuts wrapped up in green leaves bearing the name of Tching-Lau, the whole to be eaten.
23. Betel-nuts pounded.
24. Tipsy shrimps.
25. Soups of various kinds.

LETTER VIII.

CANTON, May 11th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I HAVE now visited the shop where edible birds' nests are prepared, and can therefore tell you from experience how much pains are taken over this much valued article of food. We went into one of the shops where these birds' nests alone are sold. In the first stage I saw the nest in its natural state as it is brought from Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and Sooloo. A dirty-looking little dry nest it is, with a lining of feathers. It is first scraped, the soft lining is removed, and then it is washed. It is now pulled to pieces, and the small feathers which still cling to the gelatinous matter require to be carefully removed. I saw many men employed in this last delicate operation. When prepared, the birds' nests are beautifully white. The birds,

which make these nests in most inaccessible places, are a species of swallow, or rather house marten. You will conclude from the time the nests take to prepare, and the danger and difficulty in procuring them from the rocks and caverns, that it is an expensive article of food, beyond the reach of all the poorer classes.

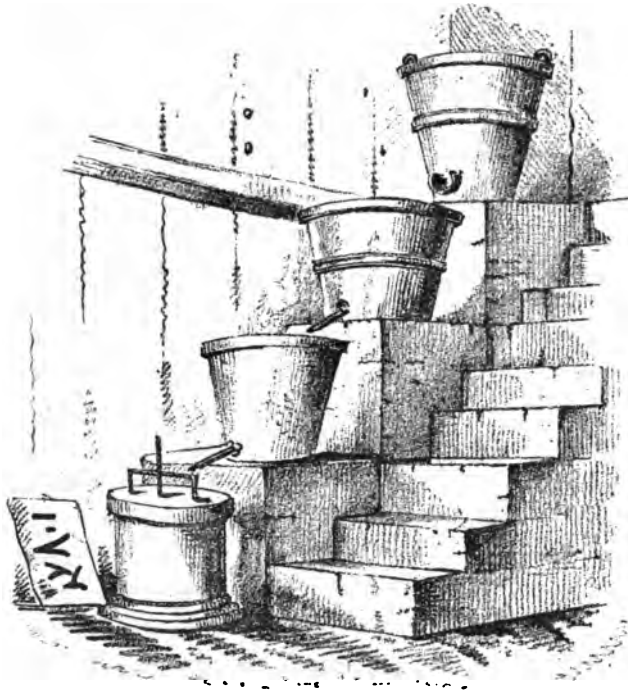
The day after we had had our grand Chinese dinner we went into the city, and the first object we visited was the Olepsydra (or water clock), which is placed in a chamber erected on the tower called Kung-Pak-Lau. (See illustration, p. 92.)

We saw four tubs containing water, which are placed on an inclined plane, and connected by open spouts. The tubs vary in size, the largest one being at the top. The water trickles from the one tub into the other. A copper dial resembling a carpenter's rule, with Chinese characters engraved on it marking its divisions, rests on a wooden float in the lowest tub. As this dial rises it shows the length of time expired.* A man remains in the building night and day, for the

* "The index in the lowest jar is set every morning and afternoon at five o'clock, by placing the mark on it for these hours, even with the cover, through which it rises and indicates the time. The water is dipped out and poured back into the top jar when the index shows the completion of the half-day, and the water is renewed every quarter."

Vide Archdeacon Gray's 'Walks in the City of Canton.'

purpose of giving the hour to the citizens of Canton. This he does during the day, by placing boards outside the clock tower, which are



WATER CLOCK.

painted white, and bear large black Chinese characters marking the hour. A gong and drum are kept in the tower, by which the watchman

makes known the various watches, or hours of the night. A small shrine is placed immediately above the steps leading to the water clock, in honour of Pwan-Ku, who is described in Chinese mythology as having been the first man. As clothes were supposed to be unknown when he flourished, he is represented as wearing an apron or girdle of green leaves. He appears to be regarded as the tutelary god of the water clock. I may here remark that this singular method of measuring time was practised by the ancient Egyptians.

Before we left the tower, the man in charge drew our attention to small bundles of "time-sticks," used, as the name would imply, for measuring time. These sticks are thirty-two inches long, and burn for twelve hours. They are used especially by the Tartar population as time-pieces. There are different kinds, some to be used in fine weather, others when the wind is high, when of course the candles burn more quickly. They have been in use for centuries past. On one of the bundles Henry observed a label, on which was a printed notice that the candles were made according to the directions of official astronomers and astrologers; that those intended for day must be lighted at the dawn of day, when the lines on the palm of the hand are

just visible, and those for use at night must be lighted at dusk, when the lines on the palm of the hand are not discernible. After further information, the circular set forth that purchasers must be careful to note the trade-mark, that there is only one establishment in which time-measuring sticks are manufactured, and that the price of each stick is six kandareens.

At the top of the same tower is a small temple, in which we saw a shrine dedicated to Sin-Fuung, who is supposed to be able to command the return of runaway slaves. An effigy of a mounted courier stands near the idol, ready to execute his celestial master's commands. Those who have lost slaves proceed to this altar, and, having worshipped the idol, tie cords round the neck of the horse on which the courier is seated, possibly for him to use in binding the runaways when caught. At another altar in this temple we noticed offerings of staves, much resembling the poles placed outside barbers' shops in England. On leaving this temple, we turned our faces homewards, and called *en route* at the private residence of a Chinese gentleman. We were shown a number of small rooms furnished with black wood furniture, and a library filled with Chinese classics. All these rooms were much ornamented by wood-carvings; they were a suite used by the family in summer.

I was much struck on seeing one of the rooms arranged as an oratory. Henry tells me that this is the case in almost all the houses of the gentry. An altar, with its incense burner in zinc, candlesticks in zinc, and usual decorations, stood at the end of the room. A Buddhist nun was kneeling before it, saying prayers to Koon-Yam, the goddess of mercy, for the souls of the departed members of the family. We walked through the gardens, which are very extensive, and arranged like all those I have seen here, a garden within a garden, having ponds encircled by walls on which are placed pots of flowers. Bridges of various shapes cross the ponds; one of them, as is always the case, is made in tortuous windings to represent a dragon, the much-prized emblem. Garden houses, furnished with black wood furniture with marble let in, and some of it ornamented with mother-of-pearl, stand in the grounds. They call these garden houses places of rest; they afford a beautiful shade from the glaring sun of the East, and are much used by all the members of the family during the summer. The double, carved wooden roofs of these garden houses are most picturesque, and so is that of a little summer-house erected on the centre arch of one of the miniature bridges. This immense house and large grounds belong to one of Henry's oldest

Chinese friends of the name of Howqua. The former head of this family, who died some years ago, was a great friend and admirer of Europeans. When we returned into the house, a lady with a very pleasant face, dressed in plain cotton tunic and trousers, the mourning dress for ladies, as then silk robes are forbidden, came forward and, smiling sweetly, took me by the hand and led me to the seat of honour. She then took some sweetmeats from a box handed to her by a female attendant, and put them into my mouth by means of a little silver two-pronged fork. She did not desist from this hospitality for some time, and I never ate so many sweetmeats at one time before. I could only bow my thanks. She then ordered some tea, and when it arrived, in a small covered china cup, she poured a little into the saucer and handed it to me. There was an indescribable grace and courtesy in all she did. I was then led by my friend into the inner hall, up to an altar, behind which there was a portrait of a young lady, evidently newly painted.

Henry explained to me that it was the lady's daughter-in-law, who had very recently (some three weeks or more) died. The coffin was placed on the left of the altar. As the Chinese do not use leaden coffins, it is singular that they should be able to keep their dead so long as

seven weeks in the house, before placing them in one of the cities of the dead, or in a family tomb.* When we stood before the coffin, which was uncovered and in polished wood, made of four pieces, the lady turned to me and smote her breast. A young man, who was also dressed in cotton mourning clothes, now came forward, and said to me, "My wife, my wife." This was the son of my friend, who had lost his only wife. He looked about thirty, and as he could speak a few words of English, he made me understand his position.

There were no mourning emblems outside the house, as I had seen in other cases, and this I was told was accounted for by the fact that this lady had died young, and that in consequence she was regarded as under the displeasure of the gods, and so not worthy of much attention. She has left one little boy, whom I saw. He was dressed in mourning cotton clothes, his little tail was plaited with white cord and he was wearing white shoes. Two little girls are also left to the grandmother's care, but the fourth and youngest child, a little girl, had been given away, as the family considered it would be too great a trouble to bring up three daughters. Continuing our homeward walk, I was much struck

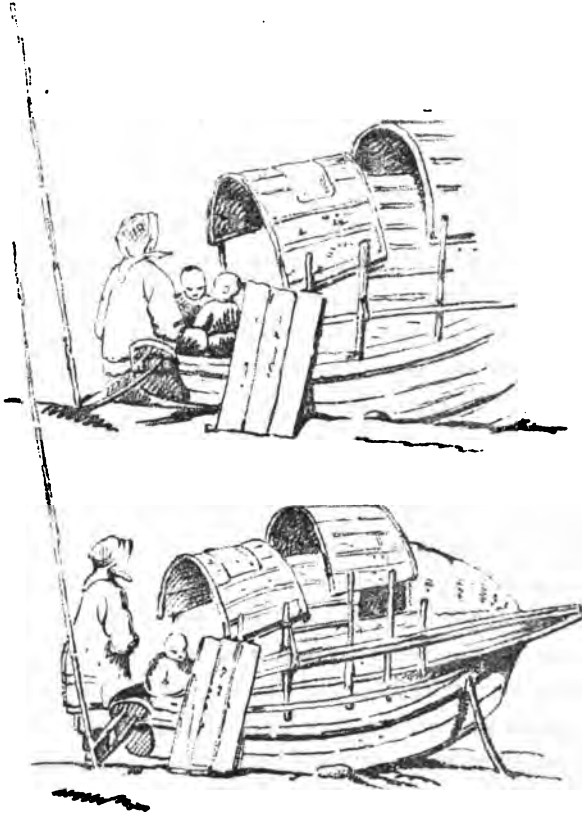
* I have since learned that Chinese coffins are hermetically sealed with *chuanam*, a species of putty.

with the amount of religious worship going on in the streets, especially in front of the open-air shrines. The Chinese certainly are a people given to superstition, but yet one cannot but admire the way they carry out what they profess. For instance, every night and morning lamps are lighted before the ancestral altars, joss-sticks are placed on the altars, and before each shop in a queer little place made for the purpose on the ground, cut out of the stone projections in front of the shops, you will see three lighted joss-sticks at the dawn and at the setting of the sun.*

Religious worship is also much observed in the boats. The sampan we always employ (a small boat with a broad beam, enclosed by a mat roof over the centre, propelled by two oars, worked in the bow of the boat, and by a very powerful scull astern, generally kept in motion by women) has a small altar erected in the stern of the boat, which is covered by a sliding door by day. Morning and night the little door is withdrawn, and you see the miniature altar, crowded with effigies of the household gods, tiny tablets for ancestral worship made in wood, painted red, bearing gilt characters signifying the names of the deceased

* Canton is, in this manner, fumigated twice daily, and it is to this circumstance that some attribute the rareness of epidemics in the city.

ancestors, offerings of fruits and flowers in tiny cups and vases, and several little zinc ornaments



SAMPANS.

surrounding the idols in the centre. Incense-sticks are burnt night and morning on this altar, at the

bow of the boat, and also at the entrance of the covered part where passengers sit. The other night I noticed a large paper lantern suspended from this part of the boat, which burnt for half an hour, and when I asked the sampan boy the meaning of it, his answer was interpreted to me as, "It is Joss' lantern." It bore the name of the tutelary god of the boat in red characters. Now when one considers the extreme poverty of these boat-people, and the daily expense of these religious offerings, trifling a sum as it may be, but a serious consideration to those who often have not the wherewithal to buy rice, one cannot but be struck by the contrast of the heathen's devotion to his gods, and our own careless observances in England, where for the most part our countrymen put religion entirely on one side during the week, airing it only on Sunday. The earnestness of these worshippers may well put us to shame. We returned home to luncheon, as we intended to make an excursion by water in the afternoon, to show our friend, before he left us, one of the villages where ducks are hatched and reared. In short, we were going to a duck village. We looked forward very much to our rural afternoon.

We entered one of the establishments for hatching ducks in the village of Pak-A-Ts'uen, and a more curious sight than this I have seldom

seen. The whole process of hatching was shown and explained to us. The first is this: a number of eggs are placed in a basket filled with heated husks or chaff of rice; they are then removed into a dark room and are put upon shelves of lattice-work. Under the lowest of these shelves there are grates filled with burning charcoal. The eggs remain in this heated room for twenty-four hours; they are then removed into an adjoining room and are placed in cloths, about fifty in each cloth. The first cloth with its contents is lowered gently to the bottom of a cylindrical-shaped basket made of rattan. Then a second cloth containing eggs is placed above the first, and so on until the basket is full. These baskets are about three feet high, and are lined with sheets of coarse brown paper. The eggs remain in these baskets for three weeks, but in order that all of them may be equally heated, men are employed to alter their position once during the day and once during the night, so, when properly looked after, the eggs which were at the bottom in the morning should be at the top at night. How they are not broken when the men lift out the various cloths I cannot tell, but the Chinese are wonderful manipulators, they seldom injure anything they touch. At the end of the three weeks the eggs which have been placed in

the baskets are removed to another room, and are arranged on very wide shelves of hard wood. They are then covered by sheets of thick, coarse brown paper, and here they remain for some hours, possibly for two or three days, when they burst into life. I was fortunate enough to see an immense number in the act of being hatched; hundreds of little ones peeped from their shells, and others were taking their first walk over the shells of their companions. Imagine a hatch of a thousand! What would a farmer's wife say to it in England, who shows you with pride a duck which has brought off fourteen little ones in triumph? No tender care is taken of the newly-born, pretty little golden balls. A man walks round and roughly catches hold of as many as are free from their egg-shells, and throws them into a basket. They are then removed to the outer part of the establishment and, when a purchaser arrives, are counted out by a man, who seizes four little necks at a time, and cries out the number in a high key. I saw a great many counted out in this manner in this duck-breeding establishment. The man, who bought hundreds of the newly-hatched ducks, took them off at once to one of the duck farms to rear them. It is wonderful how the young duck manages to crawl out of his temporary home when the moment

comes for him to be launched into the world, as sometimes he is partly under his neighbours' shelly coverings (the eggs are arranged two deep); but by delicate manœuvring he succeeds. It was fascinating to me to watch their efforts, and I could have remained a much longer time than we could allow in this part of the establishment.

On leaving this hatching establishment we went on to a duck farm, if one may so call it, in the same village. We saw here 3000 orphan ducks, which were about five or six weeks old, also many hundreds much younger in a place apart, all the latter being of the same tender age. There are itinerant duck and geese vendors who come to this village in large boats; they buy from 150 to 1000 ducks or geese at a time, and drive them into broad, enclosed wooden platforms attached to the sides of their boats. This gives these boats a very singular and clumsy appearance, and also renders them unsafe in tempestuous weather. Several of these duck boats were capsized close to the Bogue Forts, in the fearful typhoon which took place in 1862, and for upwards of a mile the Pearl river was literally covered by the feathered inhabitants of these wrecked duck boats. The sellers of ducks and geese then take their boats up the creeks and sell their birds, either wholesale or

retail, to the country people, or to the provision dealers in the villages and towns. There is still no gentle care bestowed upon these unfortunates. They are not regarded individually, but *en masse*, and a certain percentage is always reckoned upon for casualties. We walked down a long street in the village, on each side of which were duck and geese dealers, with their birds in wicker baskets beside them. I saw some of the young ones placed in open wicker baskets suspended from bamboo poles over the shoulders of some men. They were taken to the river's bank and dipped, baskets and all, into the river for health's sake, then brought dripping back to the particular spot of the street where their owners were wont to exhibit them. I had almost forgotten to say that the ducks and geese which are taken off in the duck boats do not cost their masters a cent for food. Twice during the day the duck boat is brought up to the side of the creek or river, the wooden compartment at the side of the platform on which the ducks are kept is removed, and they are allowed to wander about the banks at will, finding most ample repasts in the worms, slugs, snails and frogs which abound in the mud on the edge of the rivers and creeks at low tide. I have seen from 1500 to 2000 ducks gaining their own livelihood in this manner,

as we have passed along the banks of the river. The most curious feature of this proceeding is that the ducks are trained to obey the *human* voice, and when, after a delay of two or three hours, the man in charge of them considers he has given them ample opportunity of feeding themselves off the various delicacies he does not provide for them, he makes a call, and the birds obey his voice at once, and return to the boat. They certainly cannot have learned obedience from their parents, never, from earliest infancy, having known a parent's care. On our return from this curious duck village we went to see a floating street, which is only at a short distance from Shameen, where rice is sold in great quantities. It is difficult to approach it, as so many boats crowd round the entrance to this floating street, the boat-people bringing their baskets to purchase rice. Originally these dealers in rice lived in junks which were anchored, boards being placed between them for the sake of communication. They could therefore, at the first notice given them of danger, put up sail and go off to a place of safety. This happened, to the surprise of the English and French, during the war with China, 1859. But since then a large fire occurred, and many have now placed their junks on piles driven into the bed of the river.

However several of the junks forming this street still float. The people belonging to the rice stores live entirely in their queer habitations. Few foreigners visit them, and we had a string of men and children following us as we walked up and down the street. I was very much surprised to see pictures from the *Illustrated London News* in the boat used as a school (for there is a school even here), but the people could not understand them, one would imagine, as two of them were upside down.

Before I close my letter, I must tell you that I have been a victim of a wicked conspiracy on the part of my husband and the servants. You will learn from my last letter that I could not be prevailed upon to taste the three delicacies of cat, dog, and rat provided at the Chinese dinner, and served up in the dainty bowls. Well, when Henry returned home that night, he said to Māk, "Now understand, your missisee must eat cat, dog, and rat; you go catchee them, and every morning-time you give one piecee to eat that breakfast time." Two days passed, and Henry, thinking the servant had forgotten all about his order, sat down to breakfast, and I am glad to say that the biter was bitten, for he, as well as our friend, partook of a dish of mince, which was served up with a wall of potatoes. This was

according to Henry's wish, as he thought the potatoes, served English fashion, would be a good disguise. Having tasted it, and not liking the flavour, Henry said, *sotto voce*, to the waiting-boy, "What fashion chow-chow this thing?" and the answer was, "Belong one piecee dog." I ate my portion without comment, thinking it calf's head minced, but the idea did pass through my head that it was rather high, and I looked towards our friend, but he seemed to be enjoying it. The following morning another mince was served up, of which Henry did not partake, but I did not notice this. He declares that I helped myself twice to it. This mince was also disguised by a wall of potatoes. On the third morning another of these choice dishes, ornamented again with potatoes, was handed round, and our friend, who had been let into the secret, helped himself liberally, and declared the dish good. I remained in ignorance of what I had eaten until the middle of the third day, when the gentlemen burst into a fit of laughter, and told me of the hoax that had been practised upon me, and that I had eaten dog the first morning, cat the second, and rat the third morning. Does it not show how much there is in imagination? for, had I been told beforehand what the dishes would contain, I could not have swallowed a morsel of their contents.

LETTER IX.

CANTON, May 23rd, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

THE weather is warm and settled now, and the rainy season being at length over, we no longer have the trouble with our clothes that we had in April. Imagine what it was to have everything brought down from the wardrobes and drawers of the bedrooms and put into the library, where a fire was kept burning night and day for three weeks. You know how things look when heaped together. I tell Henry that the library, full of his cloth-clothes, boots, my dresses, etc., has looked like an old clothes shop. The heat of the room has been something unendurable. I do not know if we have had an unusually rainy season, but the effect of the damp was very disagreeable. If you put a pair of boots you had taken off in the corner of the bedroom, when you looked at them again in two or three days' time, you found a thick coating of mildew over them. The books in our bedroom also became very damp, and I was obliged to have them taken downstairs and put into the hot room.

The heat of the atmosphere has been nothing

to complain of until now, but we must expect soon to have the summer heat upon us in its full force. We think it so much better to work very hard at sightseeing before we are prevented from doing so by the arrival of the heat, and you will judge from my letters, when they reach you, that we have not been idle during the seven weeks we have been in Canton. Since I wrote to you we have been very busy, and have seen much that is interesting. One morning we went in our sampan to the Wong-Sha suburb to the temple of Loi-Sun-Yaong, as it is there that devotees resort to receive from Loi-Sun-Yaong communications through the medium of spiritualistic writing. The gentlemen had been over to the temple before breakfast, but the Tauist priests were not there at the moment, as they had been up all night at a gentleman's house in the city saying prayers for the repose of a departed soul. A votary was waiting at the temple for the return of the priests; and Henry and his friend were told that if they came back at nine o'clock they would have an opportunity of witnessing the ceremony. On learning from them that it was impossible to return at that hour, the keeper of the temple promised to delay the service till ten o'clock. Accordingly, we went to the temple at the hour appointed, and

were asked to walk into the reception-room. We were supplied with tea, but before we had time to drink it a monk came in to say that the devotee was impatient to ask the gods for some information he much required. We therefore went at once into the shrine, and saw the monk and the petitioner kneeling before the altar. The monk was kneeling in front of the devotee. Wax tapers were already lighted, and burning joss-sticks were in the incense-burners. These were gifts from the votary. Both priest and petitioner seemed very earnest in their supplications. Three minutes, perhaps, were occupied by these prayers, then both men rose from their knees.

Our attention now became absorbed in another monk, who had before him on a table a large wooden board covered with sand. He was standing by the altar. A second monk was by his side, with pen and paper, to write down the message supposed to be delivered by the god whose image stood on the altar. A third monk joined the other two, whose duty, we learned, was to explain the message when written. As a spiritualistic language is the medium employed, it requires to be translated. This language is supposed not to be understood by the other two assistants at this strange ceremony. The

chief performer now took his instrument, which was a piece of stick about a foot in length, into his hand, or rather he balanced it on his two forefingers. It resembles a long pen-handle, and is made of white wood. From the centre below projects a small piece of wood, which writes on the sanded board. It altogether reminded me of the planchettes so much in fashion a few years ago in England. In a few minutes the wooden instrument began to move, as was supposed, without the help of the monk who held it. It moved up and down on the board, tracing large characters on it; and when the board was marked all over, that part of the message was transcribed on paper by the monk, the sand was shaken, and the board placed again on the table ready for the continuation of the writing. This happened three times, the petitioner looking on all the while with rapt attention. The fourth time the lightly-balanced wooden instrument refused to move, and the monk said the god had retired. When the writing was translated by the third monk, it was found to be a message for the foreigners, and not a word was addressed to the poor devotee. The paper was handed to us, and was translated as follows: "The god is very much pleased that the foreigners are present; he holds communication with their god, and he knows that

they have come to China on a good errand." The petitioner then made a second attempt to obtain an answer from the god. He came to the front of the altar, chin-chinned the idol, and said a few words very earnestly. For some time the wooden instrument, which was again balanced on the fingers of the monk, remained inactive; then it moved, but only to write a few characters. When this short message was translated to the petitioner, it ran thus: "The god cannot speak to you to-day; he wishes you to come another day." The man, to our surprise, seemed quite satisfied, folded the paper, and put it into his pocket. He did not seem to grudge his wasted tapers and incense-sticks. The mandarins are afraid of this supposed power of holding converse with the gods, and say that through it the people are enabled to look into futurity.

Is it not difficult to come to a conclusion about it? The monk who acted the chief part did not certainly appear to move a muscle of his hand or arm. If it be a fraud wilfully committed, it seems incredible that men should give up the world and practise such deceit. Māk was with us, and when questioned about his belief in this spiritualistic writing, said quietly, "All belong lie pigeon." Is it not wonderful to find that the practice of spiritualism, mesmerism, calling

up the spirits of the departed, etc., which at present is exciting so much attention in Europe and America, should have been practised in China for many centuries past.

The annual festival of Kum-Fa has been held this week, and on Tuesday we went to the temple called Kum-Fa-Miu to witness it. This temple is situated in the Honam suburb, on the opposite side of the river to the city of Canton. Both men and women worship this goddess, but she is more especially the tutelary deity of women and children. She was, when in the flesh, a native of Canton, and lived about 1470. From early youth she devoted herself to the service of the gods, refused to marry, and was supposed to hold communion with the gods. Becoming weary of the world, she committed suicide by drowning herself in a pond, which is still shown you, close to the temple. Suicide, under certain conditions, is supposed by the Chinese to be a meritorious act. Search was long made for her body, but without success, but it afterwards rose to the surface of the water. After the body was recovered from the water, the air was redolent with sweet perfume, and an image of her is said to have risen to the surface of the pond in which she drowned herself. When we entered the temple, we saw a large gilded idol of Kum-Fa behind the chief altar, and at each of the

side altars ten gilded images of her attendants. These women are supposed to preside over the wants of little children. Each has her vocation: thus one is supposed to superintend the feeding of new-born babies; a second to grant male children to the suppliant praying before her; a third teaches children to smile; a fourth teaches children to walk; a fifth presides over the ablutions of children, and so forth. At this festival men and women come to return thanks to the goddess for the gift of children, which she is supposed to have granted them during the past year.

Women too come to beseech her to give them children, and so to prevent their husbands taking other wives. I saw many little ones in the temple, and learnt that they had been brought by their mothers to be presented to the goddess to receive her blessing. We were not fortunate enough to see many ladies, they had most probably visited the temple very early in the morning, to escape the crowd that would later in the day besiege it. The women I saw were of the lower orders, but amongst them, during our visit to the temple, were two ladies, beautifully dressed (they always come to this festival in their richest robes to do honour to the goddess), who looked shy and nervous, and who shrank into a corner with their attendants, to wait until the

altar was not so crowded. They seized a favourable moment, presented their offerings of fruit, flowers, and cakes, worshipped the goddess, and then retired. In this temple, in an upper room, we saw a strange sight. This room is set apart as the bedchamber of the goddess, and contains a bedstead, coverlet, tables, chairs, toilet services, a dressing case and many dresses, all the offerings of female devotees to the goddess Kum-Fa. There is also a small idol of the goddess in this room which is used in processions. She occupies the same position amongst the Chinese deities as Venus Genitrix held amongst the Roman goddesses. The interior of the temple was a strange sight to my eyes. Women were chatting with each other as they walked about, showing no reverence for the building. The keepers of the temple were dirty-looking men, and it was strange to see them sitting at a little table in the centre of the temple, taking their meals. The women were much pleased to chin-chin me, came close to me, examined my dress, asking (as Henry interpreted to me) if my watch-chain was gold, and other similar questions, amongst them one suitable to the occasion, "Have you a son?" Women only go up to the chief altar. The men collect at the lower end of the temple and offer their presents and their worship at an altar near the door. I was

amazed at the size of some of the offerings. Men came in carrying, by means of bamboo poles resting on their shoulders, large red boxes containing pigs roasted whole, dumplings coloured red, cocks boiled whole with their combs left on their heads, fresh lichees, etc. A table was placed before the second altar, on which these offerings stood whilst the elders of the clan worshipped at the altar. There were six or seven elders in their long silk robes, with squares of gold embroidery on their chests and shoulders, who worshipped in this way. After these men had left, and their offerings had been carried out of the temple, eight mats were placed before the altar, and eight men belonging to another clan came forward and knelt upon them. The principal man knelt alone some paces in front of the others immediately before the altar, and he poured out a libation of wine three successive times from a tiny porcelain cup, which he re-filled for the purpose. The men were dressed in long coats of silk in various light bright shades, and silk trousers, and they wore handsomely embroidered shoes. Each man did the kau-tau thrice and then rose from his knees. The offerings, which had been previously placed upon the altar, were then removed, carried home, and would serve for a feast for the elders of the clan. We conjectured that a son had been born to the chief of this clan

during the past year, and that the principal members of it had come to the temple to return thanks to Kum-Fa for the blessing. A very old, benevolent-looking attendant of the clan advanced to the mat which had been used by the principal worshipper, did the kau-tau, and then he also poured out three libations of wine. The old man looked full of joy, and afterwards went round to the elders congratulating them, and each member of the clan in turn chin-chinned the faithful servant. It was a touching sight. There is a great bond of affection between the heads of Chinese families and their retainers. All the worshippers I saw in the temple presented paper money; in the case of the poor it was simply pieces of plain whitish brown paper, but the paper money presented by the rich was ornamented with gold and silver, and done up in shapes to represent ingots. This paper money, and paper effigies representing children especially committed to the care of Kum-Fa, were set alight and thrown into a large bronze incense-burner in the centre of the temple. Each time this was done a drum was beaten, for the purpose of scaring away all hungry ghosts who might be anxious to seize the offerings and so deprive the goddess of her due, and the worshipper of her favour. I also saw large painted ornamental candles and bundles of incense sticks offered at

the altar. Sitting at the side of the temple were musicians dressed in most gaudy red cloaks, which were worn over other garments as dirty as they could be. They made a most deafening noise. In front of them stood a long table on which were red dumplings, lichees, etc., for sale, so that the worshippers who had not brought any offerings with them could buy them here. A very old man wearing an official hat acted as master of the ceremonies. Some men stood behind a long deal counter which was placed on the right hand of the temple, and on which were paper charms, paper money, and answers to prayers, for sale. A worshipper anxious to obtain some request from a god or goddess takes two pieces of wood in his hand, made in form like a ram's horn, split from top to bottom. He kneels down in front of the altar, and throws the two pieces of wood into the air. Should they both fall on the convex, or concave side, it is implied that the god refuses to hear the prayer of the votary. He, however, being importunate, throws the pieces of wood into the air, until he succeeds in placing the one on the convex, and the other on its concave side. It is now understood that the god has yielded to his importunity, and is prepared to hear his petition. He then addresses the god in a voice inaudible to all who may be standing around him, and tells

him his requirements. He then rises, and in order to obtain the response of the god, takes a long circular wooden box from the altar, which is filled with small slips of wood, much resembling pelicans, and, again kneeling, jerks the box rapidly until one of these narrow slips of wood drops out. Each is numbered, and the worshipper on taking it to the long counter obtains a printed response corresponding to the number on his particular slip of wood. For this oracular response he has to pay a few cash. As it is written in most ambiguous terms it requires to be interpreted, and for this purpose the votary takes it to a fortune-teller, who generally sits at the door of the temple, and from him receives the interpretation on the payment of a small sum of money. And thus these fortune-tellers ply a busy trade, working on the credulity of the people. As we stood by and witnessed these ceremonies, we were forcibly reminded of the Oracle of Delphi and its dark sayings.

Whilst we were still in the temple, six or seven Taoist priests (their heads are not wholly shaven like the Buddhist priests, they wear their long tails of hair done up in curious fashion on the top of the head, fastened in a knot by a wooden comb of a singular pattern) came in and arranged themselves in a half circle before the second altar, and offered up prayers, to the

accompaniment of a bell and some instruments played by three of their number. They are occupied in such services at intervals during this day, praying to Kum-Fa that children may be granted in great numbers to the Chinese nation, and that her blessing may rest upon the children. These priests wore long red robes richly embroidered. The abbot, who was with them, walked last, carrying a short crozier. The priests concluded their service by going outside the temple and offering prayers to the river deities, to an accompaniment of hundreds of fire-crackers.

The square in front of the temple was much decorated; a great shed with a mat covering had been raised, and the place was brilliant with many chandeliers. The latter held innumerable lights, which burned day and night. There were many frames containing representations of Kum-Fa, and of scenes in her life, and the puppets in them had wax faces, and moved their heads, arms, etc., to the delight of the lookers on. Screens, ornamented with beautiful embroidery, paper flowers, and various ornaments, had been lent by the gentry for the occasion. Kum-Fa is a most popular goddess.

LETTER X.

CANTON, May 30th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I AM glad to say that I have had my great wish granted, and have been admitted into the inner family life of a Chinese home. I think you will be interested if I give you a detailed account of the afternoon we spent at Howqua's house last Friday. About eleven o'clock that day seven Chinese gentlemen belonging to, or friends of, the Howqua family, called upon us, and amongst them was the son of our particular friend, the widower, about whom I wrote to you the other day. He said that his mother would much like to see "Nai-nai," and asked us if we would call upon her that afternoon. I have not, I think, yet told you that a little girl, whose father is European and whose mother is Chinese, comes to me every morning, and I teach her, as there is no school in Canton to which she can go for instruction; she was, I am glad to say, included in the invitation, and proved to be of the greatest assistance to me, in acting as interpreter. We went to the Howquas' house about three o'clock, and were received by young Mr. Howqua. He

took us into the gardens and showed us the garden houses, which are used by the Chinese as places of resort in summer. I was astonished to see two deer confined in a yard, and some geese in cages on the opposite side of the path. Henry told me that deer, peacocks, and geese* are kept because they are supposed to bring luck, and that you will find them in most gentlemen's grounds. When we returned into the house, I was taken through various halls, through suites of rooms, and at last into a room where a Chinese lady received me. She was not the lady I had seen previously at this house. After a ten minutes' conversation, carried on by the help of my little interpreter, the mother of our friend Mr. Howqua came into the room accompanied by two young ladies, who were very much rouged, and had the smallest feet one could imagine. They were thirteen and fourteen years of age. They wore their long, smooth hair in a single plait; it was tied with blue cord on account of mourning for their sister-in-law. Is it not curious that the Chinese look upon blue as a very triste colour? The colour they admire is red of all shades, which they use on festive occasions. When we had sat some time with the ladies (my little friend

* The deer is, in China, emblematical of happiness, the peacock of rank, and the goose of constancy.

and I; the gentlemen were in a separate room), I thought it time to take leave, but, on rising, I was told, to my great surprise, that a European dinner had been prepared for us at four o'clock, and that it would soon be ready. We were then conducted by Mrs. Howqua, she leading me by the hand, into the room where my husband and the gentlemen of the family were assembled. Here we found a long table arranged in true English style. It was decorated with flowers, dessert was on the table, and English knives, forks, and glasses, were placed round it. No chopsticks were there. Dinner was soon ready, and Mr. Howqua placed me on his right hand, Henry on his left. We found out that he had received full instructions about English manners from Henry's Chinese teacher, who lives with our compradore. This man was also invited, and was appealed to by Mr. Howqua on all matters of etiquette. Meat of all kinds, including pork, ham, duck, etc., was well cooked, but it was all served up cold. Sherry was provided for us, and I noticed that all the Chinese gentlemen present helped themselves to it in large quantities. I was much amused at seeing that English table-napkins were placed for us, but they were unhemmed. Henry's Chinese teacher must have given minute instructions, for a plate came in piled up with large slices of

bread. Mr. Howqua helped this himself, giving each of us two large slices. He was most hospitable, and gave me such large portions of food on my plate that I did not know what to do. Minnie said that he constantly complained that I did not like what was provided, for I ate so little. Ten Chinese gentlemen sat down with us, but only two belonged to the Howqua family. Our host sat at the top of the long table, his half-brother at the bottom. The tutor of our host's little son was one of the guests. When dinner was over, Mrs. Howqua stepped into the room and spoke to me, saying she hoped I had had a good dinner. She ordered a young slave to fan me, and from that moment this poor little girl, eight years old, fanned me vigorously with a large palm fan which she held in both hands. If she desisted for a minute, Mr. Howqua turned and frowned at her. It was a luxury much to be appreciated, for the room had become stiflingly hot. There was not the slightest ventilation, excepting by the open side of the room far away from the table. I never saw fruit helped in such a bountiful manner, and when we rose from table Mr. Howqua filled Minnie's handkerchief with peaches, lichees, and oranges. A bottle of cherry brandy was put on table at the end of the repast, and was taken by the Chinese in wineglassfuls, and

after that the native rose wine was handed, which is a strong spirit; that which we tasted was two years old. The ladies claimed me when dinner was over, and Minnie and I returned to their apartments. I was then taken by Mrs. Howqua (her position is somewhat difficult to explain to you, as she is the third of the widows still living of the late Mr. Howqua) to pay my respects to the small-footed widow of old Mr. Howqua. She ranks as the first lady in the house, and is treated with marked deference by the other widows and wives living in this large patriarchal establishment. My friend is a large-footed woman, but she ranks high among the widows, being the mother of a son. She did not, however, sit down in the presence of the small-footed lady, for before doing so it is etiquette for her and the other ladies of the household to wait for an invitation. The old lady gave me tea and sweetmeats, and questioned me in the same manner as the other ladies had done previously, as to my age, how long I had been in the country, etc. Every ornament I had on was taken off and handled by the old lady, who asked me how much each had cost, whether my watch-chain was true gold, the price of my dress, my hat, and a string of similar questions. After my visit was ended I was taken to another suite of rooms to

see an old aunt of Mr. Howqua's, who was very ill. She was on the bed, and looked a very old woman. Here I again underwent the same examination as to age, etc., value of the ornaments I wore, and so forth. I had to sip another cup of tea, and fruit was handed to me. You cannot imagine the size of Chinese dwellings belonging to rich families. They are in fact a number of houses under one roof, having separate kitchens, suites of rooms, and gardens. Having paid these visits of ceremony, my friend took me into a bedroom, where she and her daughters sleep. Chinese ladies spend much of their time in their bedrooms, and take their meals in the *atrium* upon which the bedrooms open. This bedroom, in which we took seats, had no windows and no door, one side of it being open to the *impluvium*. There were two carved wooden bedsteads in it, two or three native chests of drawers, and black wood furniture. Mrs. Howqua showed me with evident pride a large portrait in oils of herself, taken in full costume as a high mandarin's wife, and therefore entitled to wear a court dress, hat, and red button, and a jadestone necklace. She spoke of her son's widowhood, and told me he would marry again in two or three moons. I chatted with the ladies for about an hour, my little friend having

much difficulty in translating quickly enough what the different ladies said to me; and my answers to them. I was very much interested in watching their manners, and much amused with the two young girls, who were evidently very vain of their small feet—golden lilies, as the Chinese call them. When they sat down they put the tiny deformed feet a little forward out of their trousers, so that I could see the beautifully embroidered shoes not more than three inches in length, looking less than this, as the toe of the shoe is brought to a sharp point. The girls often changed their position into one not so elegant. They crossed their legs and took one of their tiny feet into their hands and sat like this some ten minutes or more at a time. Their trousers, which are extremely wide, when seen like this are most inelegant. You would have been amused to see me as I walked from room to room, my hand held by my hostess, a slave girl holding up my dress behind me. My long dress was evidently looked upon by them as a train, for Chinese ladies wear a tunic, short skirt beneath, and long trousers showing perhaps a quarter of a yard below the skirt, and so no part of their dress touches the ground. I began at length to feel very tired, the atmosphere of the bedroom was so close, and the exertion of perpetually smiling and looking

pleasant, without being able to express a word of what I felt without an interpreter, was very exhausting. I rose to put on my hat, but before I could do so, one of the ladies took it and put it on, and also tried on my cloak. You cannot imagine how strange this Chinese lady looked in the European hat and cloak. The ladies in the south of China never wear any covering on their heads, their hair being fully dressed and ornamented with flowers (artificial or natural), and pearl ornaments, jade-stone, silver and gold hair-pins, when they leave their homes to pay visits. Young girls for full-dress gild their hair. I did not know before I arrived at Canton that the ladies in the south of China never appear in the streets excepting in covered chairs, which completely screen them from view. The only exception to this is in the case of the wives of high officials, who sit in their chairs with the curtains withdrawn from the glass windows, and so are visible to all as they pass through the streets to pay their visits of state. But to return to my friend, whom I left admiring herself before the glass in her disguise of European hat and cloak. She was much pleased with herself, and asked me if I would let her try on my dress, and offered to dress me in her garments. I was too tired to comply with this request, so shook my head, and said I must take

my leave. My hostess again took charge of me, and conducted me to the gentlemen's room to re-join my husband. She then accompanied me to the outer hall, where our chairs were waiting for us, and she and our host took a most cordial farewell of us, asking us to repeat our visit as soon as possible.

LETTER XI.

CANTON, June 10th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I SPENT a very interesting morning yesterday, and I hasten to describe what I saw, as I think you will be amused to hear about it. Henry's Chinese teacher is instructed by him to let us know whenever any festival or anything of interest is about to take place. He came in to the library early yesterday morning to tell Henry that the festival of the god of medicine, Yeuk-Wong, was to be celebrated that day. Unfortunately, Henry was engaged, as he had promised to take a tourist from Europe into the city. He was so anxious I should not lose the sight, that he suggested I should be escorted to the temple by Chong-Shing, the teacher. So we started as soon as possible in two chairs, and made our way to the Yeuk-Wong-Miu. The birthday of the god

is celebrated at this festival, and the superstitious people are taught to believe that he goes out very early in the morning of this day to the mountains to gather herbs, which he uses in the medicines that he prepares for his sick devotees. As the distance to the mountains is great, and the weather hot at this season, Yeuk-Wong is supposed to become tired and over-heated from his long excursion. Therefore his temple is crowded all day by worshippers (chiefly women), who go to it from dawn to late at night to fan the idol. The temple was erected A.D. 1655, and contains a large figure of Yeuk-Wong, which is placed behind the principal altar on a raised dais. Steps lead up to the idol; on each side of it stand five effigies of men who, when alive, were celebrated for their knowledge of medicine and for skill in its practice. We arrived too late at the temple to see the lady devotees, who go there very early in the morning. The temple, when we were there, was crowded with women of the lower class; some were ascending the steps on one side of the dais on which the immense idol rests; others were standing in front and at the sides of the idol itself, fanning it with the greatest solemnity of manner. Others, having performed their acts of devotion, were descending the stairs leading from the dais. The

women buy fans at the door of the temple, and when fanning the god stand in a reverent posture, saying words of prayer to him, asking him to keep them and their families from sickness. They were doing what my heathen friend in his pigeon-English called "chin-chinning Joss." I saw one woman who bent with great devotion each time she raised her fan; she had a child strapped on her back, for whom she was most likely interceding, perhaps asking Yeuk-Wong to preserve it from infantile diseases during the ensuing year. Little children I also saw fanning the idol. The Chinaman who was with me seemed to believe in the power of the god, and told me seriously, "He too muchee tired for allo thing he do for that sick man." Some of the women presented the fans to the god after using them, and laid them on his lap, which was in fact covered with fans and artificial flowers, evidently the gifts of grateful patients. I saw others carrying their fans home, which they considered blessed by the god. When any member of their families is sick, they use these particular fans, to fan the invalid, believing that a healing virtue is in them. The temple is small and very dirty. On one side of it there is a long counter, behind which medicines are arranged in jars, and together with various plaisters are sold to the frequenters of the temple,

and are received by them as coming from Yeuk-Wong himself. The women remained about an hour more or less, fanning the idol all the time; they then did obeisance to him and retired. They presented paper money and incense-sticks to the god before they left the temple.

We had now seen the whole ceremony, so we got into our chairs. Scarcely had we gone a few yards before my chair was suddenly placed on the ground. I presumed that my guide had met with a friend, as his chair was not following mine. I could not ask, so I patiently sat still, and I became the object of the greatest curiosity to a crowd of men and boys. The latter pushed their faces into my chair in their anxiety to see me; whereupon one of the chair coolies came forward to put up the blind in front of me. As it was, I felt suffocated from the heat of the summer day, my chair being enclosed on three sides by green curtains, so I would not allow my only air-hole to be taken from me. The chair coolie then said, evidently surprised at my boldness, "More better my shuttee, then no man see you." An elderly man came forward from the crowd, who had until now indulged himself in staring at me to his heart's content, and ordered the crowd to move away. They all obeyed him at once, and I felt the benefit of the great rever-

ence and obedience paid in China to the elders by all the juniors. If the children are too noisy in the street, or in a temple, they become quiet immediately when remonstrated with by an elder. Apropos of Henry's Chinese teacher, I must tell you that he is a man full of conceit, especially vain of his knowledge of English. He comes into the library every morning after breakfast to give Henry his lesson in Chinese; and if I am in the room, he advances towards me, his full round face beaming with self-complacency, and shakes hands with me in European fashion, saying "How you do, *Sar?*" On our way home from the temple we passed by one of the cat and dog cafés. I have not yet told you that Henry took me into one of them the other day, and I thought the owner of it was disappointed as we did not order a dish of either of the delicacies he had for sale. This restaurant is known to the Chinese by the name of Whoon-~~Hang~~-Kau-Maau-Yuuk-Poo. This signifies, Whoon-~~Hang~~, the sign of the shop; Kau, dog; Maau, cat; Yuuk, flesh; Poo, eating-house. I saw many joints of dog in the front of the shop to tempt passers-by, which looked to my eyes exactly like the joints of a sucking-pig. There was a kitchen-range with pots and pans in this small shop, waiting for a savoury stew or hash to be ordered by a customer. A small placard

was fixed up, saying (as Henry translated it to me) that good black cat's flesh was always ready here. The black cat is much more prized for food than any other of the feline race. We went up the stairs leading to the saloon, where several small dining tables were placed. At one of these tables we saw a man with a little basin full of a steaming stew. Henry went up to him and said, "Maau?" (cat), and he answered "Yau" (yes). It had a very dark appearance (warranted black cat, I should think), and had a most savoury smell. On the wall a bill of fare was placed, stating the cost of a repast of dog and cat. Henry had this bill of fare translated for him, by one of his Chinese tutors, twelve years ago. This is the correct rendering of it:*

"One tael of black dog's flesh, eight cash; one tael weight of black dog's fat, three kandareens of silver; one large basin of black cat's flesh, one hundred cash; one small basin of black cat's flesh, fifty cash; one large bottle of common wine, thirty-two cash; one small bottle of common wine, sixteen cash; one large bottle of dark rice wine, sixty-eight cash; one small bottle of dark rice wine, thirty-four cash; one large bottle of plum wine, sixty-eight cash; one small bottle of plum wine, thirty-four cash; one large bottle of

* *Vide* 'Walks in the City of Canton.'—ARCHDEACON GRAY.

pear wine, sixty-eight cash; one small bottle of pear wine, thirty-four cash; one large bottle of Tien-tsin wine, ninety-six cash; one small bottle of Tien-tsin wine, forty-eight cash; one basin of congee, three cash; one small plate of pickles, three cash; one small saucer of ketchup, or vinegar, three cash; and one pair of black cat's eyes, three kandareens of silver." These restaurants are crowded at the celebration of the Hachi, or festival of the summer solstice, by men of all ranks. To eat dog's flesh, especially black dog's flesh, on that day, is to secure the eater against sickness for the rest of the summer. A strange sight I saw this morning on passing by the Namhoi prison, and one of a very painful nature. Many human beings were confined in a small enclosed space, which was barred. These poor wretches were closely packed, and the look of the place reminded me of what I had read of the Black Hole in Calcutta. These unfortunates are condemned to wear cangues, or large wooden collars, which differ in weight and size. In hot weather these must prove a torture to these prisoners, whose offence is one of petty larceny only. They can scarcely lie down, and jostle against each other as they force their way to the bars of their cell to get nearer to the stranger visiting the place. They hold out their emaciated,

dirty hands between the bars, and cry out incessantly, "Kumshaw, Kumshaw." It is a sad sight—these human beings shut up in a cage. Many die from this painful punishment during the summer. In the square in front of the Nam-hoi prison, I saw numbers of prisoners exposed to scorn, who wore long chains round their necks, to which heavy weights were attached, to prevent the possibility of escape. There are varieties in this kind of punishment, but the object of the whole is that these men should be held up to the scorn and derision of all who pass this way. They are allowed to pursue their trades in the street. I saw some who were working as shoemakers. When they caught sight of us they stood up, took their chains in their hands, dragging their weights of iron or stone behind them as they shuffled along towards us, and begged us in piteous voices for kumshaws. I have just received a visit from the American consul's wife, who lives on the other side of the creek, in the western suburb of Canton. From her windows a very busy crowd is always to be seen; and one day last week, as she was looking out of one of the windows, she saw a man in the street who had a shawl tied round him. From this shawl peeped out three little heads. A crowd of women gathered round this man, the shawl was un-

done, and the poor little baby girls were passed round from one woman to another to be examined. Then the bargaining began; the highest bidder offered five cents for one of the little creatures, but the man demanded six cents, and refused to sell either of the infants under this price.

He eventually walked off from the spot without meeting with a purchaser for his tender human freight. The Chinese are not altered in this respect, a father looks upon the birth of a female infant as a misfortune, a bitter disappointment. When some of the mandarins have called upon us who can speak a little pigeon English, and Henry has asked either of them how many children he has, he has answered as the case may be, "Three," or "four piecee." Then Henry will say, "How many piecee girls," and probably the answer will be, "Two" or "three piecee girls." They have not been even counted in the number of the family. A wife who only has daughters is never a favourite, and if she be a first and small-footed wife this is a great source of sorrow to her, as she knows that her husband will take a second wife. In the latter case a man can make the choice himself, and generally selects a slave or a woman from the humbler walks of life, who has not contracted feet. If he choose a slave he

pays a certain sum of money to the owner to redeem her. The second, third, or other wife has therefore a greater chance of being loved than the one who, as first wife, is always selected for the young man by his parents, and whom he has not been permitted to see until the marriage day, in fact until she has been brought to his home. An inferior wife takes a subordinate position in the house, and scarcely attains to the true rank and dignity of a wife until she becomes a mother. If the husband choose, he can raise one of these extra wives to the first position on the death of the small-footed head wife ; but this is rarely done.

The heat of summer is now upon us, and I can speak from experience of the peculiar, unpleasant, damp heat that is one's constant companion night and day. Still I do not suffer as some appear to do from the climate. I rise at half-past six and am occupied with my little friend from eight o'clock until prayers in the church at nine. After breakfast we have some more lessons, and then Henry sometimes takes us out sightseeing. We call our sampan, and as Henry knows every creek he can direct our boat's crew to any spot where he wishes to land. Often he sends the sampan round to some other creek to await us. It seems to me so curious, these boat people are content to wait any length of time for us and

charge nothing for their time, only expecting the fare to and from the place of destination. Henry, from his many years' residence in China, was so accustomed to this arrangement that, soon after his arrival in England, he took a cab from the West End to the City, and kept it waiting some two hours or more. He was much surprised when a large fare was demanded, one item being, of course, for the length of time the cab had waited for him. The family who belong to the sampan we hire have seldom, if ever, been beyond that part of the river which is immediately facing Canton; they have never ascended the creeks, and sometimes look very angry when they are made to go farther than they wish. We make various excursions up these creeks, landing at pretty spots, and having our tea prepared in the boat and brought on shore to us. How you would laugh, and how English servants would grumble, at our arrangements. A tray containing a teapot, milk jug, and cups and saucers, is placed at the end of the sampan; a tin of butter, bread and knives are put into a basket, also a bundle of firewood. But I have forgotten the chief ingredient, which, besides the tea, is necessary for our comfort, and that is a bottle of fresh water. The river water is simply unfit to be taken in any way, and one day that our boy had forgotten to

take the fresh water, and we were obliged to try the river water, the tea, as far as I was concerned, was thrown away. I should like you to picture our little party starting for our excursions either early in the morning or in the afternoon—Henry, myself, and Minnie, our old coolie, and one of the waiting-boys, who looks after our tea. Even the boys know nothing of the country close to Canton. The people at the places where we land are much interested in us, and on the whole are very polite. Sometimes children will raise the old obnoxious cry of “Fanqui” (foreign devil) when they run after us, but Henry rebukes them and quiets them by telling them he will take them before the mandarin if they persist in applying that word to us.

I cannot say much for the walks about Canton. We have taken several, but we cannot walk two abreast, and so we go along in Indian file. The chief walks we have tried have been amongst the paddy fields. The economy of the Chinese prevents their wasting land on roads, so you have only narrow footpaths on raised banks, broad enough generally for one person. These paths are in some cases paved with granite, which is roughly cut in all shapes and sizes, so if you are not careful you are apt to stumble. When a chair comes along these paths and has to pass you, it is a

difficult matter, and I had to climb up a bank, a few days ago, to get out of the way of one of them. We have a most faithful little follower in a new purchase we have made. When we were at the Fa-ti gardens some days ago, a number of dogs sprang towards us barking furiously, which is the habit of these Chinese dogs. Their bark is worse than their bite, for all their enmity ends in noise. The Chinese cuff them and kick them with their high soled shoes to keep them quiet. Amongst this party of dogs a sweet-looking little puppy came forward and looked at us in a most friendly manner. I was smitten with him at once, and we asked the owner of the garden what he would take for him. He said, "Three hundred cash," which we promised to send him by our coolie (we never carry money about with us), so the purchase was concluded, and I carried my pet off in my arms. This little dog is a full yellow in colour; he has a longish curly coat, a black tongue, and a black roof to his mouth. When he is older he will have a long bushy tail curling over his back. He evidently prefers foreigners to his own countrymen. This is not the case with another puppy lately given to us by a friend. He is only happy with the servants, seems to hate our society, rushes into our room when we are at dinner, takes what we offer him, and bolts out of the room

again. If his manners do not improve, we shall make him a present to one of his beloved countrymen.

LETTER XII.

CANTON, June 19th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

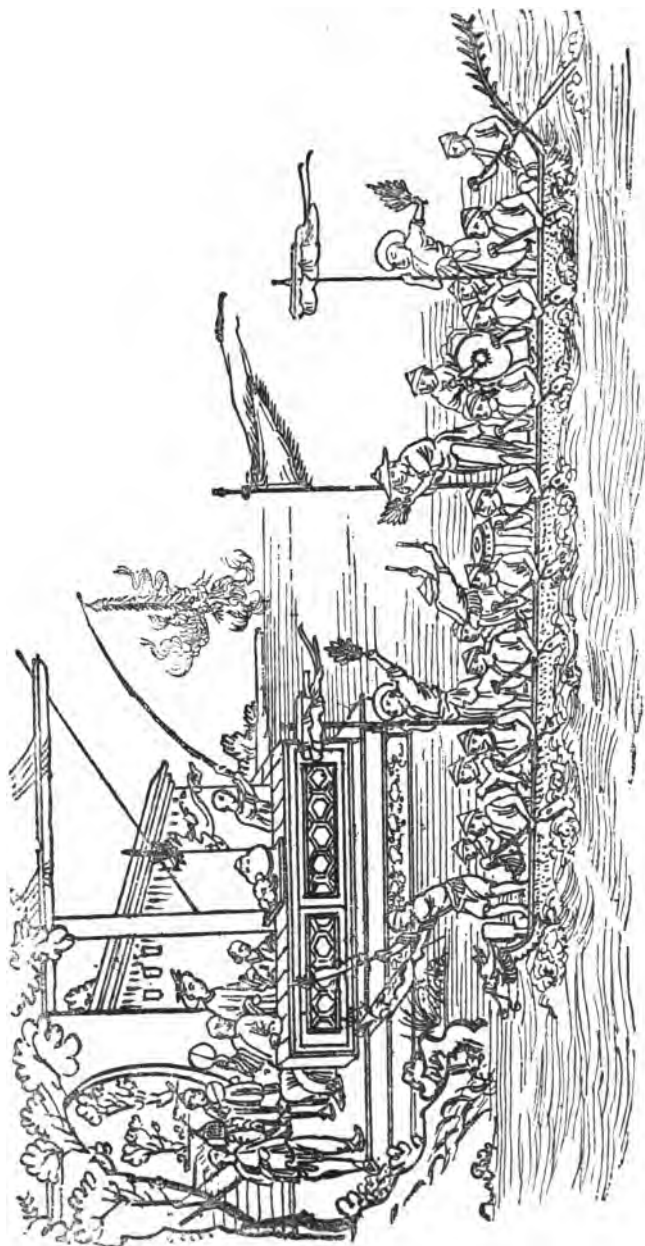
A VERY curious festival was observed here on the 15th inst. ; it was held on the river, and so Shameen was much resorted to on that day. The Chinese, who ordinarily are not admitted into our settlement, unless they have some business to transact with foreigners, are allowed to come into Shameen for this festival, and a great number availed themselves of this permission last Friday. A detachment of the Chinese city guard was sent by the mandarins to keep order. This singular festival is in honour of Wat-Yuen, who lived more than 2000 years ago. He was prime minister to a sovereign who ruled over one of the three kingdoms into which China was divided at that time. This king was a most profligate prince, and Wat-Yuen remonstrated with him again and again on his conduct, but without success.

At last Wat-Yuen, despairing to effect any reform, resolved to commit suicide; this being

considered an honourable act under the circumstances.

He therefore threw himself over a bridge and was drowned. Some fishermen who were in a boat close to the spot saw him fall into the water, and tried to recover the body. But they could not find it, nor were the people more successful on the following day, who went in great numbers to seek for the corpse. They threw rice into the river, so that the fish might eat it, and not touch the body, an idea prevailing amongst the Chinese that the soul of a man is much grieved if the body which it inhabited be at all mutilated. Since then, yearly, on the anniversary of the day on which Wat-Yuen committed suicide, a festival has been observed, during which dragon boats go up and down the rivers, full of men who are supposed to be searching for his body.

But I must describe these curious dragon boats to you. They are of great length, and are extremely narrow; they are painted in very bright colours, red and gold predominating, and are ornamented at the bow with the head of a dragon painted in gaudy colours, and at the stern they carry the tail of the dragon. Some of these boats are constructed to carry sixty, some eighty, some a hundred men. Those who propel the boats use short paddles, most energetically throwing the



DRAGON BOAT.

water high into the air on raising them. They of course sit down in the boat. Between the rowers a number of men, dressed in most ornamental, embroidered clothes, stand, making wild gestures, and shouting as they go along. Some of them beat gongs, others drums, to give time to the rowers, and by this continuous sound you know when a dragon boat is anywhere in your neighbourhood.

One man in the bows of the boat waves a flag wildly, others imitate the action of throwing rice into the river as an offering to the manes of Wat-Yuen. The noise accompanying the dragon boat is supposed to frighten and to drive away all evil spirits and to prevent the fish from preying upon Wat-Yuen's body. Along the centre of the boat are bright-coloured umbrellas, flags, banners, etc. The crews are frantic with excitement, and present a very wild effect. These dragon boats belong to different villages and clans, and the expense of each is defrayed by the particular village or clan to which it belongs.

After the festival is over the boats are sunk in the muddy beds of creeks, and are not taken up until the following dragon festival. Accompanying each large boat are six or seven smaller ones, which have similar flags at their prows, and contain members of the clan to whom the

large boat belongs. In the leading boat of the six or seven small boats, a man blows continually upon a conch shell. The dragon boats from their peculiar construction run great risks, and often some accident takes place during these festivals. The observance of this feast is universal throughout the empire. It was not well observed this year owing to the floods, which rendered the river very dangerous.

We took our sampan and remained on the river nearly the whole day, witnessing the festival from various points.

When we were in the Wong-Sha creek, which is in fact a water street with houses on each side built on stakes, we met one of these dragon boats. Whether the men purposely threw up their paddles with greater force than usual as they passed us, I do not know, but we had a complete shower-bath and were wet through. Yesterday another heathen festival was observed at a place called Hwang-Chu-Kee, about four miles up the river, at which we were present. As a rule, the Chinese at this festival resort to a temple about five days' journey from Canton, to worship Luung-Moo, the dragon's mother; but this year, in consequence of the floods caused by part of the river's bank giving way on the western branch of the Canton River, and the immensely strong currents

caused by the recent heavy rains, the worshippers of Luung-Moo resorted to one of her temples situated at Hwang-Chu-Kee.

This temple is very small, and could not accommodate a large crowd of worshippers, so a large mat tent had been erected, and a small idol of the goddess had been carried into it to receive the homage of her votaries. Numbers of large house boats passed us on their way up the river to Hwang-Chu-Kee. These boats are very handsome, being gaily painted and carved. They are most commodious, and are used by Chinese families when going into the interior of the country. They were gaily decorated with flags and lanterns, the latter bearing the names and titles of the families who had hired them. Some of these boats contained men only, others women. I was much interested in watching the latter as we passed close under the stern of their house boats. Some of the ladies were beautifully dressed, and their heads were decorated in full with flowers, real or artificial. There were crowds of female attendants with the ladies. The separation of sexes in public is rigidly observed in the south of China. A father would not like to be seen with his daughter in the streets, nor a husband with his wife. The European custom of men and women walking together is not understood, and when European

or American ladies are seen holding the arms of their male companions, it is an abomination to the Chinese. Henry and I are most particular, and when we enter a Chinese house, we do not speak together, nor sit near each other, fearing to transgress the strict rule of Chinese etiquette on this point.

We had much difficulty in arriving at the temple of Luung-Moo, as the current was so strong; and the boatwomen of the sampan we had hired could scarcely make way against it, in fact at one time it was only by clinging on to the trunks of the trees that were near us that the women succeeded in pushing the boat along. We were really going over the fields, which owing to the inundation are in many places covered with water. We took three hours at least to do the distance of four miles. Crowds of women were assembled in the mat house I have mentioned. Some wore dark or light blue silk tunics, which were much embroidered; many others were quietly dressed in blue or prune coloured cotton clothes. Chinese ladies often go to these ceremonies very simply dressed, as they can thus pass unnoticed in the crowd. I could not in very many cases distinguish the mistresses from their attendants.

It was a sight to see the gaily decorated heads of many of the ladies; they are particularly partial

to the sweet-smelling Arabian jessamine, which they place down the sides of the teapot-shaped coiffure. What strikes one so much when one sees such a gathering as the present is the want of variety in the colour of the hair, eyes, and complexion of the Chinese. The goddess Luung-Moo lived in the fifteenth century, and the only thing for which she appears to have been celebrated is the vain supposition that she gave birth to a dragon instead of a child. The heat was intense in the temporary temple, and was much increased by the large fire in the incense burner, which was incessantly fed by paper offerings. The ladies were most polite to me, smiled, nodded, and seemed as if they would like to have had a chat with me. From the temple we went into the village of Hwang-Chu-Kee, and Henry took me into the large ancestral hall, in front of which, in December 1847, six of our countrymen, young merchants, were murdered. They went up the river and landed at this village, and, after a walk of some five or six miles, they returned to the village in order to rejoin their boat. They were seized, confined in the ancestral hall, and, after an examination had taken place before the elders, were put to death. As the bodies, when recovered by the community at Canton, presented a most mutilated appearance, there was

every reason to suppose that they had been cruelly tortured before receiving the *coup de grâce*. Five Chinese were afterwards beheaded for this crime, on the village green of Hwang-Chu-Kee, in the presence of a company of H.M. 95th Regiment, which was sent from Hong-Kong to be present at the execution. As the condemned men were gagged, it was thought that they were not the perpetrators of the murder, but rather some malefactors under sentence of death for other crimes. At that time a very bad feeling existed on the part of the Chinese towards all foreigners. Henry's Chinese teacher accompanied us on this excursion, and remained with us whilst we were in the temple, but when we proceeded towards the village he was *non est*. We met him again on our return to the boat. Henry, knowing full well that the man was a coward, and feared to be seen with the foreigners in the village, asked him why he had not accompanied us. His ready answer, given with the invariable smile of self-satisfaction, was, "That villagee too muchee dirty, my no likee walkee." I have forgotten to mention that mothers who have eligible daughters worship the goddess Luung-Moo, praying her to grant them good sons-in-law. On our way home, as we approached the confines of the city, we noticed that one of the boats used

for worship looked unusually gay, and we drew up by the side of it, and went on board. We were told that one of the young men belonging to the river population was celebrating his wedding festivities on this boat, and we saw a long table at the end of it which was covered with various offerings, consisting of a pig roasted whole, coloured dumplings, dyed eggs, etc. These edibles were to form the feast in the evening, and we were invited to remain and partake of the good things. Musicians were placed on a raised platform at the prow of the boat; they immediately commenced playing in our honour, and made such a din as was truly deafening with their gong, drum, shrill pipe, and another wind instrument. The bridegroom sat at this end of the boat, apart from his bride, who stood amongst the women by the table. I was disposed to pity the poor man, thinking he must have had the drum of his ear nearly broken by the noisy instruments; but he looked serene and placid, and perhaps enjoyed the noisy music. The women handed me a cup of tea, and gave to Minnie some eggs made in sugar and coloured, very similar to our Easter eggs. They had been offered to the goddess Kum-Fa, in hopes that she would grant a male child to the newly-wedded pair. Having drank our cups of tea, we rose to take leave. I chin-chinned the

women, and they returned the salute to me, continuing to do so from the bows of their boat (which was at anchor) as we rowed off towards home. I do not think I have described the floating temples, as these boats used for religious worship may be justly called. It is in them that all religious ceremonies for the population on the water take place. They are constantly passing up and down the river, and as they pass you see the altar, a long table for offerings, and the attendant priests who are chanting some especial service. On a marriage occasion they are very bright, with lanterns and gay flags. At other times, when prayers are being said for the dead by priests engaged for that purpose, the flags and banners are white and blue. I think the river is most fascinating, and I perpetually see something fresh and attractive on it. The passenger boats, with their large dark brown sails in the shape of a butterfly's wings, are my especial delight. They look so grand as they sail slowly down the centre of the river. If the tide is strong and against them, they creep as close as possible to the river wall. From our windows these large sails look so strange, as they rear their heads above the banyan-trees quite close to our house. Boats containing everything for the use of the water-population ply about the

river. Thus you see a floating greengrocer with vegetables and fruit, looking very picturesque as they are exposed to view. Then comes a floating fishmonger, a floating florist, a floating vendor of firewood, or a floating potter. Then a small boat passes you with a barber inside it, who plies his trade amongst the river-population only. A small boat, whose approach is made known by the tinkling of a bell, contains a doctor for the boat-people. The large floating kitchens are very peculiar, being, as their name denotes, for the use of those whose requirements exceed the limited space in their own boats. One also sees poor dingy boats which are kept for the use of conveying the dead to their burial. And, yet again, there is a peculiar class of boats belonging to lepers, who can never mix with other men; and a piteous sight it is to see this afflicted race cut off from communion with their fellow-creatures. These lepers belong to the river-population. Flower boats are not so numerous on this river as they used to be, and I am disappointed with them. The entrance to the saloon, which is high and has a very deep covered roof, is much carved, and sometimes painted in bright green and gold. As we have often passed down the river after sunset, which is now at seven o'clock, I have again

and again seen these boats illuminated. There are several in a row, and they look very gay and bright at night. I have been amazed with the number of floating hotels, which are anchored together in a vast concourse, in fact these boats form streets on the water. They are extremely useful to the people; for suppose a passenger boat from the country should arrive late, those travelling in it cannot enter into the city of Canton, for, as you are aware, the city is shut up by many gates and barricades at nine o'clock, and no Chinese can pass through them after that hour. Barricading the streets at night is one of the strangest and most Oriental customs practised here. Foreigners are permitted to pass through most of the barricades at night, but it is a great labour to do so; you have, even if it be tolerably early, say ten o'clock P.M., to arouse the watchman, who sleeps on a bench by the gate. You must then call out that you are foreigners, and wait some minutes for the man to bestir himself. The unfastening and removing the great wooden bars, to let you pass through, is a work of time. When we have been out some distance sightseeing, and feel tired, these gates and barriers are a trial to our patience. To-day is the Chinese Midsummer Day, called Ha-chi, and a very curious custom, as I have previously told you, is observed

on it. Every one who can obtain it eats black dog's flesh, as it is supposed that it renders all who take it on this particular day strong and well during the ensuing twelvemonths. Our servants are enjoying a feast of it to-day. If black dog's flesh, which is more appreciated than the flesh of dogs of any other colour, cannot be obtained, people content themselves with the flesh of other coloured dogs. I have had to keep a sharp look-out for our four favourites, as dogs are often stolen at this particular time of year. Many Chinese went yesterday to see the dogs killed, but I declined an invitation to be present. Dogs are slaughtered in all parts of the city, and much cruelty is shown towards them, as they are often severely beaten before they are killed. This cruel custom is in connection with some superstitious belief.

LETTER XIII.

TAI-TUNG-KOO-TSZE MONASTERY, June 25th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I HOPE I do not tire you with my long descriptions of all I see in this wonderful city. I am seldom without a subject for my descriptive letters, and I am sure you will agree with me that we have worked hard at sight-seeing. I really feel the heat less when employed. I think the most

trying hours are from twelve to three o'clock P.M., and if I am at home, and not obliged to occupy myself, I confess to finding the heat very oppressive. We had expressed a wish some days ago, in Mr. Howqua's hearing, to see a lotus-garden, many of which are now in bloom. Mr. Howqua kindly remembered what we had said, and called last Friday to arrange to take us to a friend's lotus-garden up the river. He came yesterday, bringing with him a large mandarin-boat, which was most comfortable and roomy, and was capable of holding twenty persons. It was divided into two compartments; in the inner one an English lady, my little friend Minnie, I, young Howqua and his two amahs sat. We started about noon, a party of eleven, including seven gentlemen, Henry being the only European gentleman. We were less than an hour on our way to the garden, as we had the tide in our favour. This is a most serious matter for consideration in arranging water parties on the Pearl River. In the garden we entered a charming garden house, two storeys in height, beautifully furnished with black wood furniture inlaid with mother-of-pearl or with marble. There was much fine wood-carving in it. The small rooms were divided by screens of carved wood, and many Chinese paintings in scrolls hung on the walls. Chinese gentlemen use these

gardens, which may be at long distances from their private houses, for entertainments, but sometimes they spend a few days in them during the summer. There are sleeping-rooms, beside many sitting-rooms in them. We saw two fine peacocks in a large cage in this garden, a deer, and also some white geese, which were in such a cramped cage that they could scarcely turn. All these creatures, as I have observed in a former letter, are kept by the gentry to ensure good luck to their families. We were disappointed in not finding any of the lotus plants here in bloom. We therefore went on in the mandarin-boat to another garden, belonging also to a friend of Mr. Howqua; but here we were equally unsuccessful, as a large pond, which should at this time of year be full of lotus plants in bloom, only showed green leaves, and no flowers. We only saw a few pots of the lotus in bloom; one of which, a white lotus, was most beautiful. I admire the green leaves of this plant, they are so charming in shape and are bright green in colour. Mr. Howqua placed a drop of water on one of these leaves he had plucked, and it shone like a brilliant as it ran about on the shining surface of the leaf. I think this plant more lovely than any other I have ever seen. There was also a large garden house here, and, as one usually finds, it was abundantly furnished

with black wood couches, chairs of different sizes, and tables. But this garden house is falling rapidly into decay, the upright supports are out of the straight, and we saw many cracks in the walls. It will, as is too often the case in China, be allowed to fall a victim to white ants, damp, etc.; not a care will be bestowed upon it. When it is unsafe for use, it will be pulled down, and a new house built in its place. Our host had ordered a Chinese luncheon to be brought on here. Little plates containing meat dumplings, or cakes and sweets, were on the centre of the table, and chopsticks were placed for each person. Every one when seated began to help himself with his chopsticks to what he fancied, and our host and his friends placed on our plates, first a cake, then a little meat dumpling, again a cake, and so on. It is not very pleasant to see your neighbour's chopsticks at one moment with their tips in his mouth, the next moment taking up a little cake and placing it on your plate. After luncheon we strolled about the garden and then returned to our boat. I forgot to say that tea and fruit, consisting of lichees and whampees, had been given us on the boat whilst we went up the river. Fruit was again handed to us in the first garden house we visited. Mr. Howqua made a large purchase of lichees just before we entered our boat on our

return home, and the Chinese gentlemen ate fruit at intervals until we reached Shameen. A Chinese gentleman does not seem to know what rest means, he is either eating, smoking, taking snuff, or fidgeting about at all times. Mr. Howqua allows us no quiet when we are with him: he is perpetually on the move, and when you hope that you will be allowed to sit down for a few minutes in a garden house or elsewhere, he says, "Now, we go on." Just before we drew up at our landing steps tea was again handed round, as a final chin-chin. We arrived home at four o' clock, the Chinese gentlemen accompanying us into the Chaplaincy and sitting down for five minutes. When they had left, Chong-Shing, the teacher, handed a covered tea-cup to Henry, which the latter had admired en route, and in his pigeon English said, "Howqua present you this."

Mr. Howqua told us that he is adding a new room to his house, and intends to furnish it in European style for his bride elect. He is to be married in a month or so, when a lucky day can be discovered for the marriage. His widowhood will not have lasted more than four or five months. I am writing this letter in what I call our little garden house, in our favourite monastic retreat. As we were having our luncheon (for we have been

here all day) in the grand visitors' room of the monastery, we were told it would be required when we had finished our meal by a party of Chinese who were wishing to dine there. One of these



AL FRESCO SHAVING.

gentlemen came into our room just now, and, having recognised Henry, saluted him. He has held high official rank in one of the provinces. He and his two companions are more than middle-aged men ; each has three or four wives at home,

and yet they were accompanied by three young girls of very bold manner and certainly not suited to be their companions. The monks allow this kind of society to frequent their monastery, because it brings dollars to them. There are great



AL FRESCO TAIL-PLAITING.

rejoicings going on in the city to-day amongst the carpenters, shipwrights, and stonemasons, many of whom have their workshops in this neighbourhood. There is a general holiday amongst these classes, as it is the festival of their tutelary god, Loo-pan. So great is the din from

gongs and firecrackers, as to disturb the seclusion of this monastic retreat, and to render letter-writing difficult. The Chinese festivals last three days, namely, the eve, the day itself, which is most observed, and the following day. Temporary theatres have been erected on this side of the river in honour of the fête. The mandarins have closed the theatres in the city for the present, as there have been disturbances in them, and one or two free fights have taken place at some of the late performances. As we came to the monastery this morning, I was very much amused at seeing, close by the gates of the monastery, barbers plying their trade *al fresco*. Two men were being operated upon; one was being shaved, the other having his tail plaited. It is a common sight in the streets of the city to see barbers shaving their customers in the open air.

LETTER XIV.

CANTON, July 8th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I AM sure you will be much amused with a description I am about to give you, of a visit we have lately received from several Chinese ladies and gentlemen. Punctually at the hour

we had invited them, three o'clock P.M., they arrived. The party consisted of my friend Mrs. Howqua, her two daughters, a friend of theirs (the wife of a high mandarin, who brought her two little boys), three grandchildren of Mrs. Howqua, a little boy aged eight, and two girls of four and six years. They were accompanied by a great number of amahs, and also by male attendants. Eight gentlemen arrived, independently of the ladies, and about a quarter of an hour after them. Two of them were the brothers Howqua, the others their friends, and young Howqua's tutor. Some youths, whose relationship to the gentlemen I never found out, were also with them. Many male attendants accompanied the gentlemen, and you can imagine what a large party they looked when they were all assembled. Just before the ladies came, a present arrived for me from Mrs. Howqua in true Eastern style. It consisted of four cages with their feathery occupants. These were two canaries, a parrot, a pair of love-birds, and three very small Chinese birds. Accompanying them were two live Chinese pheasants tied up in a basket. Some coolies brought these cages, etc., into the verandah. They scarcely had set them down, and I had not had time to look at them, when there was a ring at the bell and the ladies were

carried into the hall in their covered chairs. Out they stepped in their blue embroidered costumes, their hair immensely decorated with flowers, rouge on their cheeks and by the side of their eyebrows, their lips painted vermillion, and in some cases the palms of their hands also rouged. I felt overwhelmed, and could only smile a welcome. The ladies took seats in the drawing-room; the gentlemen moved about the rooms, examined our blue porcelain, of which we now have a large collection, and pronounced it good. They then took a turn in the verandah, and in the compound, and asked to see the church.

We had had dinner prepared for all the party, intending the ladies to sit at one table in the dining-room, the gentlemen at another. But this did not satisfy the rigid rules of Chinese etiquette. The ladies on hearing of the arrangement shook their heads and begged Minnie to tell me that they required nothing to eat; they had come only to see me. The actual fact was that they had expressed a wish to be present at a dinner served up in European fashion. On our pressing the matter, the gentlemen spoke for the ladies, and said they could only eat if they might have their dinner first, before the gentlemen entered the dining-room.

It still wanted three quarters of an hour to the time at which we had ordered the repast for the whole party ; but on the waiting-boys being consulted they said that the cook could give the ladies dinner by themselves in ten minutes. With the marvellous facility that Chinese show in preparing a dinner at the shortest notice possible, the meal was prepared in that time, the half of what had been ordered for the whole party being served up. The ladies, to while away the ten minutes, went upstairs, examining everything with childlike curiosity. Minnie told me that one and all were struck with the cleanliness of the European house.

The young ladies were delighted with the contents of my workbox, and begged for some needles and some pearl buttons. The amahs received a needle each from me, which they stuck into their coiffures. We now sat down to dinner, the amahs taking up their places behind their respective mistresses, upon whom they waited as if they were little children. They become very confidential companions of the ladies, and are treated well as a rule by them ; in fact these ladies seemed to cling to their amahs as English children cling to their nurses, asking them their advice and their opinion, in all matters. We had by request no chopsticks on the table, using only knives and

forks. My poor friends looked sorely puzzled as to the manner in which they should be held, and tried to copy me. The European food appeared to be most distasteful to them, and I saw one of the young ladies retch and put out of her mouth into her amah's hand, when she thought I did not see her, some meat she had tasted. They persisted all the time in saying that it was all very good, very good. They struggled valiantly on, and just tasted each dish, repeatedly saying that they liked it. The poor things were a little relieved, I fancy, when the sweets made their appearance.

I was quietly watching all the movements around me, and I saw an amah take a little sponge cup pudding into her hand, break it into pieces and feed her mistress with it. The same thing also happened with the fruit. A Chinese lady is most dependent upon her amah, she does nothing for herself; and they say that her garments are taken off by the amah at night, and that she is lifted up and put into bed like an infant. Chinese ladies cannot understand us European ladies; they say, "You all the same as men." They certainly do not admire us, neither our manners, nor our dress, nor our independence. They ask me why I do not dress like them, why I do not rouge, etc. The ladies were very abstemious, only tasting the

champagne and sherry. The tea was evidently a great comfort to them as it was served in their own fashion. When our dinner was over, the ladies proposed that I should take them to the Shameen gardens, which are at ten minutes' distance from the Chaplaincy. You would have been diverted if you could have seen our party start from the house. The ladies wore beautifully embroidered robes; the under skirt was in dark blue silk, with raised embroidery of shaded light blue flowers. The skirt sits extremely close, and is in fact very narrow; the front piece of it is laid on, and is stiff with embroidery. At the sides and back it is folded into tiny plaits, and the embroidery is worked on the outside of each plait. There was a border of pale blue shaded flowers round the edge of the ladies' skirts. The trousers were made in plain dark blue silk, and the tunic, in the same colour and material, made with wide flowing sleeves. The throat and sleeves were edged with the shaded pale blue embroidery. The ladies on arriving apologised that they had not on their best red costumes, saying that they could not wear them on account of their mourning. The two Miss Howquas' dresses were plainer in style than the dresses of the elder ladies. Their shining long hair was worn in one long plait, tied at the end with blue ribbon. All my visitors (I

mean the ladies) were small-footed excepting Mrs. Howqua. On leaving our house I gave my hand to the latter in true Chinese style, and we started on our walk. I felt a little shy of stepping on to the public promenade with my Chinese friends. The young ladies hobbled on a few steps, but they soon became tired and mounted the backs of their amahs. The young married lady was carried in this manner all the way. I must say that it is a most inelegant style of being carried. The lady passes her arms round the amah's neck, and places her knees in the hands of the servant, which are held out behind her. Our progress was very slow, and I believe the distance seemed immense to the ladies, who are wholly unaccustomed to walk outside their gardens. Mrs. Howqua rested on each bench by the way, and we took half an hour or more to walk the short distance. We returned home in the same style; and when we reached the Chaplaincy the amahs handed the ladies long pipes, from which they took a whiff or two. The attendant stands behind on one side and prepares the pipe. When it is ready, she puts the end of the long tube to the lady's lips, who takes one or two whiffs only. The ladies now enjoyed a quiet gossip with each other. I have not yet told you that the three young children belonging to the widower were

dressed in strict mourning. The little girls wore plain cotton tunics and trousers, and had no flowers in their hair. Their shoes were plain white bound with blue. The little boy wore pale blue silk trousers tied round the ankle with blue ribbon; he wore also white shoes, and his tail was tied with blue.

The gentlemen expressed much satisfaction with the dinner and also with the wines, to which I heard they had done ample justice. Mr. Howqua came up to me and said, "Thank you, No. 1 good dinner." All were now in the verandah, and tea was again handed. The ladies sat apart from the gentlemen, not addressing them, only speaking to each other. They at last rose to take leave, and we ordered their chairs to be brought into the hall. With many bendings, nods and chin-chins, they now entered their chairs, taking the children with them, and were carried off. The gentlemen left soon after, about seven o'clock.

They sent their visiting cards (which are made of broad strips of red paper, having the names written on the right-hand side) to us immediately on reaching their house. This is an Eastern custom, signifying that the guests have arrived home in safety. This entertainment took place on Tuesday, and on Wednesday an

invitation arrived for us to dine at the Howquas' house, and to take some friends with us. But I must reserve the account of this dinner for another letter.

LETTER XV.

CANTON, July 14th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

My last letter contained the account of the entertainment we gave to our kind Chinese friends. Now I must tell you all about the afternoon we spent with them. Our original invitation had been for five o'clock, but on Wednesday a message came from Mr. Howqua asking us to go at half-past one, as he wished us to see some Chinese conjuring. He also said he hoped we would take others besides the two friends who had already promised to go with us. So I sent a note to the American Consulate, to ask the consul and his family to join our party. The consul was engaged and could not go, but his wife, her daughter of twelve years of age, and a friend accepted the invitation. When our large party arrived at the Howquas' house, we were received by the gentlemen, and conducted by them into one of the sitting-rooms. Mrs. Howqua and her daughters met us there. They were all dressed in plain blue cotton dresses edged with

black, as they were at home and it was still the season of mourning with them. We had sat for a few minutes only when we were asked if we would like to go into the garden and visit the elder brother's house, which, although under the same roof, is distinct in all its arrangements. The sun was scorching, and I wondered to see Mrs. Howqua with her head uncovered walk through the sunny spots in the garden. We returned to the house about half-past two, I and another of our party having our minds somewhat eagerly fixed upon the thought of luncheon, as we had eaten nothing since breakfast. On entering the house we were shown into a room in which a Chinese dinner was laid out in style on a long, narrow table, but alas, there were no signs of luncheon. We were asked to take seats in the atrium, or hall; the musicians were then taking their places in the outer court. Such a half-clothed, dirty-looking set they were, and their instruments were of the most primitive kind. When they were seated, one of the players beat loudly upon a tom-tom, another played a drum, another a fife, another cymbals, and the rest played upon wind instruments. The chief performer now stepped into the centre of the half circle made by the musicians, and beat a pair of large cymbals together to the accompaniment of the other instru-

ments. The noise was deafening, and we all longed to be farther off from the musicians. The performer in the centre then played a variety of tricks with his cymbals, causing one to roll on the edge of the other, throwing one into the air and catching it on the other as it was still spinning round. He then fixed a stick into the centre of one of the cymbals, and caused it to rotate violently, placing the end of the stick alternately on his chest, on his face, and neck. His last trick was the best. He took into his hands what looked like a long folded paper umbrella, and having caused it to rotate with great speed, a sudden explosion was heard: the umbrella disappeared, and a lamp with a light in it took its place. Our hopes of luncheon faded into the distance, as Mrs. Howqua handed us fresh lichees, taking off the husks herself, and the attendants brought round plates containing two peaches and two kinds of tiny cakes. I have not yet, I remember, told you of a little performance given to us in the garden. Before we re-entered the house, two men came into the garden with a monkey, a Pekinese pug, and a poor thin sheep. The monkey jumped through hoops on to the back of the sheep, walked on a tight-rope, rode on the back of the pug dog, and then the animals performed other tricks. This performance was very poor, but it seemed to be appreciated by the

numerous amahs and slaves, who sat behind their mistresses. In this house of the Howqua family there are at least a hundred retainers. But to return to our party, whom I left listening to the musical performance: after a time it ceased, and the Chinese gentlemen, in that curious unsettled state that seems to be their nature, took us round the gardens and garden houses a second time. When we had had our stroll, we returned to the house, and the ladies of our party were conducted to the different suites of rooms to visit the ladies of the family, whom we had not yet seen. We all underwent the usual examination of our dresses, jewellery, etc. One of our party, a tall and handsome woman, had dressed herself in a bright dinner dress, which she thought would please the Chinese ladies. They very much admired her, but thought it a pity she did not rouge, as it would improve her so much. One of the Chinese ladies, whose acquaintance I had previously made, said she was sorry I could not speak Chinese, for, if I could do so, she would ask me to spend two or three days with her. I think during that time I should expire from want of air, as the bedrooms into which we were shown, where the ladies were sitting, had a most oppressive atmosphere. At last our host came into one of the rooms in which we were chatting through our two

interpreters, Minnie and the young daughter of the American Consul, and asked us to return to the room in which dinner was waiting for us. When we had all assembled, Mr. Howqua—instructed again as to matters of English etiquette by Chong-Shing, who was also an invited guest—advanced to me and said, “Number one lady, come,” and took me by the hand to the post of honour on the right side of the table. He then returned to the group of ladies at the end of the room, and said to the American Consul’s wife, “Number two lady, come,” and he took her to the table, placing her on his left; and so he acted until all the ladies were seated at the upper end of the table. Poor man, he looked sorely puzzled as to what to do on such an altogether novel occasion; but when he was quite at a loss, he appealed to Chong-Shing for instructions. And now—the gentlemen placing themselves as they liked, the elder brother of our host sitting at the bottom of the long table—dinner began. It was all served up in small porcelain basins, each holding about as much as an European breakfast cup. Nearly all the varieties of food were taken in the form of soup. We had birds’ nest soup, sharks’ fin soup, seaweed soup, duck soup with small pieces of ham and bamboo slips cut up in it, and soup after soup followed too numerous to mention.

After about twenty of these meat soups, a sweet soup was served round by the attendants (they bring a little basin of each kind and place it in front of the guests); it was, we were told, made of eggs, and flavoured with the lotus seed. Sweet cakes accompanied this dish. We thought, and I might say hoped, that the dinner was drawing to a close, but meat and soup were handed on and on in endless variety. The meats served to us were boiled mutton and duck; beef is never eaten in Chinese houses, as they consider it a sin to eat the flesh of the ox and buffalo, which are so useful to man for agricultural purposes. We learned afterwards that our host stopped several varieties of viands coming to the table which were prepared for us, as Chong-Shing had heard us say to each other that we could not attempt to eat any more, and so he gave the hint to Mr. Howqua. It was really a kind action towards us, as you are considered to be wanting in politeness if you do not taste all that is provided for you at a Chinese banquet. Now, besides the stream of dishes that had flowed in upon us, we had been helped by our host to various dishes from the centre of the table. The wines provided were sherry, champagne (the two former most indifferent in quality), and sam-shu, a strong white spirit. The Chinese are woefully

cheated by the compradores in wine ; for instance, they give them a high price for champagne, and are supplied with a wine which savours of gooseberry rather than champagne, and is really unfit to be taken.

I was much surprised to see the Chinese gentlemen drinking wine with each other at this dinner, but I learnt from Henry, on returning home, that this practice has been in vogue in China for many centuries past. I was constantly called upon to take wine with one or other of our Chinese friends, and found that I must, much as I disliked it, sip one of the three wines placed in porcelain wine-cups before me.

The gentlemen have a curious way of drinking to each other : they raise cups full of wine to their lips, toss them off, and turn the mouths of the empty cups towards the table. The dining-room became more and more oppressive : it was devoid of fresh air, and the atmosphere was suffocating. Our host seemed to suffer from the heat as much as we did. He and the other gentlemen turned their wide sleeves back over their elbows, and sat with arms exposed for a few minutes at a time. They all groaned and puffed at intervals, and seemed to feel the heat very much. I dare say they did not know that the discomfort arose from want of ventilation. No punkahs are used

by the Chinese, but their place is supplied by female slaves, who stand behind the guests using large fans without ceasing. During the whole time we were at dinner the musicians played, and so loudly, that one felt as if the drums of one's ears must break. The tom-toms and the drums were rarely at rest. It was curious music, not divided into pieces, but was continuous. It did not vary as regards forte and piano. The only difference I could find in it was this, that at times there was a kind of fife solo with drum accompaniment. Sometimes the cymbals had it more to themselves.

At intervals, two or three of the musicians sang, in the peculiar falsetto always used in Chinese vocal music. I believe that the whole we heard referred to some historical event of the past. The grimaces made by the singers are most comical. To produce some of their high, curious sounds, they extend their mouths to their ears, and then suddenly close them. They invariably keep their eyes fixed on the ground when they sing. The falsetto is not only used in song, it is also the voice in which all Chinese actors speak, and it produces a strange effect upon an ear unaccustomed to the sound. Actors are never allowed to use the natural voice. The female characters are always taken by men, and

this falsetto is supposed to imitate a woman's voice.

When we had at length finished dinner, which must have occupied between two and three hours, seats were again arranged for us at the lower end of the room, and the concert began with renewed vigour. Our host becoming excited, he stepped into the circle of the musicians, and banged away with some cymbals until we were nearly driven wild with the noise. Two of our party were ill the next day with nervous headache, caused, I believe, by the noise and heat. I forgot to say that at dessert some of the gentlemen played, at our request, a game which curiously enough is much in vogue in Italy. With a shout at the top of their voices each of the two players puts forth so many fingers of the right hand with a sudden jerk, throwing the hand forward towards the other player. Each cries out the number of fingers which he supposes are held out on his and the adversary's hand. The game is played most rapidly. The one who makes a wrong guess has to drink a glass of wine as a forfeit. We rose to take leave about nine o'clock, and were accompanied to the outer hall by Mr. Howqua, his friends, and Mrs. Howqua *mère*. They took leave of us in European fashion, shaking our hands. As we were leaving, the elder Mr. Howqua,

a man of about forty years of age, invited us to take dinner with him in two or three days' time. He sent the usual red letters of invitation on the morning of the day we were expected. His house is, as I have said, under the same roof as the one in which we had dined with his brother, but it is differently arranged, and has its own kitchens, suite of rooms, visitors' hall, and is, in fact, a separate house. We dined in a very pretty room, beautifully furnished with carved black wood furniture. There was some charming carving about the room, forming a half screen from the ceiling. The dinner was most varied, and the number of soups which were served exceeded that of the former dinner. The same peculiarity I noticed here: one soup might be birds'-nest; the second had pieces of pork in it; the third was sweet, made of the seeds of the lotus; the fourth had pieces of duck in it; and so on, in endless variety. We had at the very least thirty different kinds of soup, and it became at last a very difficult matter to me even to taste the new dish placed before me.

I was filled with astonishment at the capacity for taking food exhibited by Master Howqua. He ate everything in turn; I watched him, and did not see him refuse one dish. He also drank champagne and wine freely, and incessantly pledged all around him. No one checked him.

We Europeans missed our bread to eat with the various meat soups. No rice was handed with them, which would have taken its place. Rice was served only as a separate dish; a basin of it placed before us, flavoured to Chinese taste, was unlike anything I have tasted before. Young Howqua ate all his portion of rice, holding up the little bowl to his lips, and stuffing the rice into his mouth rapidly with his chopsticks. One would have imagined, to see him take this rice at the end of the repast, that he had not tasted the thirty odd soups which I had seen disappear from before him. The room in which we were entertained most fortunately looked on to a pretty garden, and was open to the air. The lotus was out in flower, and was a great ornament to the garden. I could not succeed in conquering the difficulty of eating with chopsticks. Before I went out to China I fancied that one of them was taken in one hand, and the second in the other hand, but I find that both are held between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand. After many vain attempts, I gave in, and my host, seeing my difficulty, spoke to one of the waiting-boys, who brought me a knife and fork.

When we go to the houses of Chinese gentlemen to dine, the host sometimes sends to our

house and borrows glass, knives and forks, etc., for our use.

The weather is now intensely hot. There is no refreshing breeze, and the heat of the sun is very great. The mosquitoes are great torments just now; but I do not suffer from their bites as others do. They are especially fond of newcomers, and Henry finds that they again discover an European flavour in him. They bite him much more now than they did before he left China for England.

We saw a rock snake yesterday in the path immediately by our compound. We called our coolies, and after what seemed a long "talkee talkee" they captured and killed it.

LETTER XVI.

CANTON, August 1st, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I HAVE witnessed a most curious ceremony since writing my last descriptive letter, and it was a scene I can never forget. It is customary for Chinese women to go to the cities of the dead, but especially to one to which the name of Ti-Tsong-Om is given, on the fourteenth day of the seventh month, to wail and lament for their

dead relations, principally for those they have lost during the preceding year. Widows particularly resort to these places to bewail the death of their lords and masters. When we were yet some distance from the Ti-Tsong-Om, we could hear the women's voices raised in groans and lamentations. As we entered the temple attached to this city of the dead, a most curious sight presented itself to our view. In the great hall of the temple we saw a set of temporary altars erected round the entire hall, each altar being devoted to the use of one mourner, or to a group of mourners. These bereaved ones had placed on these altars various offerings for the departed. I saw as many, if not more, than thirty small china bowls full of various meats and fruits, arranged before one set of mourners. Behind each small altar two strips of red paper were pasted on the wall, bearing on them in black characters the names of the lost relatives. In some cases, effigies made in composition to represent attendants, male and female, nearly the size of life, stood by the altars. All is regulated according to the position and wealth of the mourners, the offerings varying much in number and quality. On some of the altars I saw sealed red paper packets, which I learned on inquiry contained letters addressed to the dead; these letters and paper money, paper clothes, and

paper sedan chairs, etc., are burnt in the quadrangle of the temple, and are thus by the action of fire supposed to be conveyed to the souls of the departed. In front of the long row of altars sat the mourners in various positions. Some had covered their faces with coloured handkerchiefs, and were sobbing bitterly, rocking themselves backwards and forwards as if in the agony of grief; others were kneeling on the ground, making a low wailing sound; and again others were resting from their demonstrations of sorrow, and were employed in offering paper money, or were lighting joss-sticks. The noise, the heat, the crowd, you cannot exaggerate to your mind's eye. These women had been occupied in this manner for hours and hours. They began at dawn of day, and it was five P.M. when we visited this marvellous scene.

We went into four or five of these halls, or shrines, and found each of them full of women lamenting their dead. There was not the slightest ventilation in either of these places; and the heat was increased not only by the crowds of mourners, but also by the burning paper money offerings, which flared up to a great height from the incense burners by the centre altar, and by the lighted incense sticks, which were innumerable. Hundreds and hundreds of women were collected together in this temple. I could not distinguish

between the ladies and their attendants, as all wore cotton clothes, the ladies laying aside silk dresses on such an occasion. Their heads too were not ornamented with flowers, but plainly dressed à la teapot; nor were their faces rouged. As we threaded our way down the very narrow opening left for passers-by, we caused much distraction to those who were engaged in howling. They would stop suddenly, look at us for a few seconds with great curiosity, and then resume their lamentations. I saw few tears, and I felt that a good deal of the noisy demonstration of grief was not real, but rather an acted part. In some cases, though, we saw women with tears streaming from their eyes, who looked as if the outwardly expressed sorrow were real. On leaving these crowded shrines, we were shown into the reception hall, and were offered cups of tea, which proved most refreshing to us, overcome as we were from the intense heat of the day, and from the stifling atmosphere in which we had spent the last few hours.

After we had rested a short time, we walked down some of the streets of this great city of the dead. On leaving it, we went to the landing stairs where we had left our boat, got into it, and had a weary, long pull home against the tide. It was quite dark when we started homewards, and

the river looked so pretty with its brightly lighted streets of floating hotels, flower boats, and floating temples.

We have now the full heat of summer upon us, and it seems to me wonderful that people are equal to giving and to going out to dinner parties at this season. I was struck on my first arrival at Canton to see the English ladies with so much colour in their complexions, and the yellow tint one notices on the faces of those who have spent some years in India, not visible here to any degree. But now, as the hot weather continues day after day, I notice the colour fading from the ladies' cheeks, and a pallor taking its place. I am told that by the end of the hot weather all of us will bear a very washed-out appearance.

We have been into the city many times since I last wrote, and I begin to know some of the streets very well, and Henry contrives that I shall go down some new ones in each of our walks. The more I see of the city, the more I am struck with its vast size. The other day we went into a temple dedicated to two deities, one being considered the inventor of letters and the other the inventor of the art of printing. The former idol bears the name of Tchong-Kit, the latter the name of Tchoy-Chung.

Tchong-Kit lived 2852 years before the Christian

era, and is said to have been asked by the emperor of China then reigning to invent some characters for recording events, as at that time the emperor's only resource for remembering what had happened was by tying knots in a piece of string. The people are also taught to believe that miraculous displays accompanied this invention of letters, that reptiles, dragons, snakes, and demons, had previously much tormented the people, but that they feared, upon the written characters being used, their evil deeds would be reported to the celestial rulers, and so they would incur their displeasure. They, therefore, resolved no longer to terrify the people. The earth, too, testified her gladness at the invention of letters, and produced spontaneously abundant crops of rice. Tchong-Kit is supposed to have invented ten thousand of the fifty thousand characters now forming the Chinese language. Students come to this temple and ask these gods for assistance in their literary labours. It bears the name of Chong-Tchoy-Tchu-Miu. In it stands a small board bearing in gold letters the sixteen sacred precepts. At certain seasons of the year sermons are preached in this temple by the literati, who generally select one of these sixteen precepts as a text. When I was visiting it the other day, one of these sermons was being delivered to a very attentive audience,

composed of men of all ages and of all ranks. Two small pagoda-shaped furnaces stand in the courtyard of this temple, into which the man in charge throws scraps of paper, which bear printed or written characters. These are collected from all parts of the city by men employed by the literati, who carry two baskets made of rattan, hanging at the ends of a bamboo pole, on which are inscribed in Chinese characters, "Spare the waste paper." The man bearing the basket cries out, as he slowly passes down the streets, "Spare the waste paper! Spare the waste paper!" All who hear the cry hasten to give up the waste paper in their possession bearing printed or written characters. The ashes of the burnt paper are taken from the furnaces, put into earthenware jars, which are then taken to the river, placed in it, and are carried onwards by the tide to the ocean. I have often seen these jars containing the ashes of the waste paper floating down the centre of the Canton River. The reverence that the Chinese pay to a written language which can convey the wisdom of past ages to all succeeding generations, makes them consider it a sacrilege to trample under foot any paper which bears written or printed characters. They hold learning in the greatest honour, and their aristocracy is necessarily a highly-educated

one. They appreciate literary distinction in Europeans, and the mandarins often ask Henry what degree he has taken. When he tells them he is a doctor of law, they rise and chin-chin him.

LETTER XVII.

CANTON, August 9th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I AM half afraid you will think us over-enthusiastic sightseers when you read the description I am about to give you of our excursion into the city at dead of night. A day or two ago, Chong-Shing told Henry that a grand gathering of worshippers was to take place in the temple of Sheng-Wong, the city king, the week following. We felt very disappointed about it at first, as we were engaged to go to a dinner party that particular night. As, however, Henry learnt that it would not be necessary to go into the city until a very late hour of the night, we determined not to miss the wonderful sight of these worshippers, who come from all parts to the Sheng-Wong-Miu, on the 27th day of the seventh month of the Chinese year. We went to our dinner party, and remained with our friends until eleven o'clock, not mentioning our intended excursion to them,

as few or none of the foreign community take any interest in the events happening in the Chinese city. We returned home from our dinner party in our chairs, changed our evening costumes, and at half-past eleven we made our start for the city.

The temple which was the object of our journey, and which we reached at half-past twelve, was that called "Sheng-Wong-Miu," dedicated as the name implies to Sheng-Wong, the city king, or as he is sometimes called, "The Protector of Walled Cities." The distance to the temple was about four miles, and there was much delay in getting the city gates and the barricades open for our chairs. The coolies cried out, "Open for a venerable foreigner who wishes to pass through." The cry had to be repeated many times before the sleeping guardians of the gates or barricades were aroused, and after they had answered, they were (what appeared to us) long before they turned out of their queer sleeping quarters by the sides of the gates.

We were obliged at one place to get out of our chairs, go up some steep stone steps on to a portion of the city wall, walk a short distance on the wall, and then go down some very steep steps on to a parade ground. Here also we had to wait until some double gates, the Kwei-kok-lau-mun, were opened for us. It is certainly

a wonderful privilege granted to the Europeans, and denied to the Chinese, to go through this military gate of the city at night. Fortunately the English Consul lives in the heart of the city, and a communication must at all times be kept up between him and the residents at Shameen. And so the promise was given when peace was concluded between England and China, that foreigners should be suffered to pass through this gate at night. The sick resort to the Sheng-Wong-Miu on this festival to receive the blessing of the god, and those who cannot walk are carried there by their friends, and laid on the ground in the large shrine or smaller shrines of the temple. They, and all the worshippers who can do so, wait here for the arrival of the prefect, one of the leading magistrates of the city, who worships the god in the name of the people. As very many of these poor devotees had come in from all parts of the country, and would not be allowed to pass through the city gates after eight o'clock, they came to the temple early in the afternoon. When we arrived the concourse of human beings was immense, the gilded idols glittered in the brightness of innumerable lamps and chandeliers, and the words came to my lips, "And the temple of Baal was full from the one end to the other."

The sick were lying all around us, and it was difficult to thread our way without treading on the feet or hands of the prostrate forms. We saw disease in every shape and kind, and it was sad to notice the sick children there in very great numbers, who looked worn out with the long waiting. Poor little things, many were asleep curled up under our very feet, others were asleep in their mothers' arms. Each nook and corner were occupied by human beings, and the temple contained thousands of worshippers, men, women, and children. I think that two-thirds of the worshippers, however, belonged to the gentler sex. The outside approaches to the temple were covered over, and thus the narrow streets looked like long arcades.

Stalls had been erected in the immediate neighbourhood of the temple for the sale of bright-coloured pictures representing the god in all his actions when on earth, or disciples of his, or great men of his time. Between these picture-stalls, tables covered with creature comforts were placed, containing, amongst other things, drinks of various kinds in tiny glasses, and fruit.

The approach by which we entered the temple reminded me most forcibly of that leading to a Roman church on a hill close to Rouen, which I once visited on a fête day, where the bright

pictures of the Blessed Virgin and saints, and the stalls where various blessed rosaries, etc., were sold, were arranged in a similar manner. The vast gathering of people was most orderly. Only a military mandarin with a handful of soldiers was present. Many of the worshippers, not finding places inside the temple, seated themselves on the outside and waited patiently there until the state worship should begin. I saw a vast number of men and women who, after worshipping before the high altar, lighted long prayer sticks which they had purchased in the temple, and carried them away. These incense sticks are afterwards placed upon their family altars. Others had brought clothes belonging to their sick relatives to be blessed by the god, and to receive the impression of his great seal.

Again in other cases, it was those who had recovered from some severe sickness during the past year, who had come to offer their grateful worship and to thank Sheng-Wong for his merciful care of them.

It was a most wonderful, the saddest sight possible, to see these thousands and thousands of human beings collected together, having in many cases borne much fatigue and pain in long journeys to this vast temple, and then to look from them

to the object of their reverent worship—a poor wooden idol. Henry tells me that when he last witnessed this same festival, 24,000 people were present at the ceremonies.

We passed on to a corner of the building where the worshippers were closely packed together, and were pressing eagerly forward, intense excitement visible in their faces. They were occupied, at least those who succeeded in pressing near enough, in pushing pictures they had purchased at the stalls outside the temple, through some wooden bars, behind which several men were standing, employed in receiving the pictures from the hands of the worshippers. Within this partition, railed off, and most jealously guarded, these men having received the pictures passed them on to others who were busily and incessantly engaged in stamping them with the god's great seal. This is a State temple, and belonging to it are two seals which bear the god's name. They are too valuable to be left in the temple, but on this day of the year they are brought from the prefect's official residence, where they are kept, and are allowed to remain in the temple from eleven o'clock P.M. of this day, until three o'clock the morning following. During this time men use them for putting the seal on to the pictures and clothes of the

devotees, who in this way consider they gain a blessing from the god.

One of the large seals is made of silver, the other is made of jadestone. Should those offering their pictures or clothes to be blessed be able to afford a few cash only, the latter seal is used ; but should they offer a larger gift, the silver seal is brought into play. On receiving their scrolls or pictures, with the seal impressed upon them, they take them home and hang them up as talismen, as they are considered to be efficacious in warding off epidemics and other evils. The money received for the use of the seals is given afterwards to the person who farms this source of revenue to the temple. On the installation of a new prefect of Canton the privilege, which has been purchased, of selling all kinds of offerings, such as incense sticks, prayer papers, the annual use of the seals, etc., is again put up for sale. As the bargain lasts good only so long as the same prefect is in office, it is attended with some risk.

The vast multitude of people were very polite, made way for us, and we had no fear of their molesting us ; but the military mandarin on seeing us pass his chair, and recognising Henry, was courteous enough (I think partly from fear of any mishap befalling the foreigners) to order

some of his soldiers to guard us, and to conduct us about the temple. You must not picture these soldiers to yourself as in uniform. Two of those who took care of us wore ordinary long white grasscloth coats, the others had on a kind of livery. The latter were dressed in blue cotton, with a pattern worked in white on their backs. They all wore pointed mandarin hats, trimmed with red fringe. How amused you would have been could you have seen Henry and me picking our way through the densely packed crowd, and on either side of us our guard, who carried Chinese paper lanterns suspended from bamboo rods.

The people really were much amused to see us amongst them, and many of them said "Chin-chin" as we passed them. We were too tired to wait for the arrival of the prefect at three o'clock A.M. Henry has been present at the whole ceremony, and he tells me that when the prefect comes into the temple the vast multitude give a shout in honour of Sheng-Wong. The prefect then, having performed the kau-tau before the high altar, presents his offering to the god and withdraws from the temple. The people then proceed to worship the god, but they are so closely packed it is impossible for them to perform the kau-tau. They stand, therefore, and raise burning incense sticks above their heads. This festival lasts three days,

the 27th, 28th, and 29th days of the seventh month of the Chinese year.

LETTER XVIII.

CANTON, August 13th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

A DAY or two after I had written my last descriptive letter to you, an invitation came from the Howquas for us. We started from home on Saturday, after having taken luncheon, as we concluded we were only invited to pay a long afternoon call upon our Chinese friends. When we arrived at the Howquas' house the ladies of the family took possession of Minnie and of me, and we scarcely saw Henry all the afternoon, nor anything of the gentlemen of the Howqua family excepting our particular friend, who often came into the ladies' room to see what we were doing, and to have a chat with his mother. To our surprise we had not sat with the ladies more than half an hour before we were told that luncheon was ready. It was laid out in true Chinese style on a small round table in the atrium outside Mrs. Howqua's bedroom. There was no cloth on the table, nor is it customary for the Chinese repasts to be placed on a covered table; they are

laid on the bare board. The usual cakes in great varieties were in the centre of the table, and chopsticks were placed for each of us. The Chinese ladies stood round the table some short time before they took their seats, as there was a great question as to which of them should take her seat first. This goes on at every meal amongst the ladies; each says the other must take the precedence. My hostess bowed towards her friend, and waved her hand towards the chair, evidently begging her to seat herself; the friend returned the compliment, and so the ladies bowed and bowed for some minutes until the friend took her seat. The absurdity of the whole matter is, that etiquette is so strict and defined in China that there was no doubt as to which of the ladies would eventually seat herself first, but it is customary to show this affected humility before accepting the honour. As I could not speak Chinese I thought I had better accept at once, and on Mrs. Howqua requesting me to be seated, I with a smile obeyed, thus of course appearing very discourteous to the Chinese ladies. One of Mr. Howqua's daughters was with us, and was about to take her seat at the table after the elder ladies had at last placed themselves, when her mother reminded her that it was a fast day in memory of her father's death, so she

and her younger sister, who had also joined us, sat and looked on as we took our luncheon. It is not customary for the Chinese to entertain on these days of fasting, which last three days in succession, and I was surprised, when I heard the occasion of the fast, that Mrs. Howqua should sit down with us, but it was evidently in compliment to me as a foreigner that she did so.

The courtesy of Chinese to strangers is very great. You feel on entering one of their houses that their great desire is to please you, and that their whole attention is given to you as a guest. Henry says when he has called at a house of mourning, in which, according to Chinese custom, the seats of the chairs are covered with blue, a servant has been called to bring a red covering to place on the chair intended for him, as a Chinese gentleman considers it is not kind to make his friends mourn for his particular loss. I noticed Mrs. Howqua partook only of a gelatinous kind of soup and some small cakes, which are the orthodox food for fasting days. Our small party at table consisted of Mrs. Howqua, her particular friend, a pretty woman, but highly rouged and coquettish, young Howqua, Minnie, and myself. I have never felt more embarrassed than I did at this unexpected meal, for, besides having partaken of luncheon only a

couple of hours before, I was feeling ill. How to eat the various dishes placed before me I did not know. I wished my little interpreter to say to my hostess that I was feeling unwell, but she said that this was impossible, as the ladies would be afraid at once that I might be sickening with some contagious illness, or, as they would put it, that I might have brought some evil spirit into the house which would also harm them. So I was forced to hide my feelings and put into my mouth pieces of food which at the best of times would have made me feel very uncomfortable. The ladies often said to Minnie that I was not eating, that I did not like what was provided for me, and Minnie turned to me begging me to make greater efforts. It is so very amusing, she and I speak in the most unconcerned manner upon what is passing before us; she explains to me the various customs I have not seen before, for in the office of interpreter she can speak to me at any moment, and for this reason she is generally placed next to me at table. "Pray help yourself," was Mrs. Howqua's frequent remark, "or we shall not think you friendly." All constraint was thrown aside, and I saw the Chinese ladies in their accustomed home life. They and young Howqua helped my little friend and me to many delicacies with their own chopsticks.

At the end of the entertainment, when I considered my efforts to take the food which was so distasteful to me had been crowned with success, and after I had tasted several sweet cakes, etc., Mrs. Howqua rose from her chair, dipped a piece of duck, at least two inches square, which she held in her chopsticks, into the little basins containing soy and mustard, and put the whole as a *bonne bouche* into my mouth. I rose when I saw the fate coming upon me, smiled I should say a ghastly smile, and was obliged to swallow this large piece of meat. Champagne was supplied; Mr. Howqua came himself and opened the bottle, and you should have seen his struggles to accomplish this. He knelt down, held the bottle at arm's length, the attendants standing at some distance. At last he had in despair to break off the neck of the bottle. He appeared at one time with a bottle of white wine, which by the label I found to be whisky made in Germany. When luncheon was over we adjourned into Mrs. Howqua's bedroom, and the lady who dined with us told me I was a Number one lady, and that she intended to embroider me a pair of shoes.*

* A Chinese lady spends her time in embroidering shoes and other work, in card and domino playing, in lounging in garden houses, in gossiping with her female friends and amahs, and in smoking occasionally.

A drawer full of newly embroidered shoes was brought forward for me to see. They were made for uncompressed feet. The natural size of the Chinese foot is very small, and both feet and hands of a Chinese lady are most symmetrical. The colours and patterns shown me were varied, and I was asked to choose which I liked best; I think this choice took half an hour at the least, Mr. Howqua's taste being at last appealed to. Eventually a white silk ground, a pale pink shade let in and embroidered with a darker shade of the same colour, with very narrow black and gold braid worked in, was pronounced by all to be in perfect taste.

Having quite decided, the lady sent for her silks, and then quietly informed me that she only had a pale mauve silk that must form the ground-work of the shoes. It all had to be begun again, and we finally decided that a pale yellow silk should be embroidered with a darker silk on this mauve ground. The Chinese ladies are just like grown-up children. I believe this lady knew all the time that she had no variety of silks to offer me. I asked her if she would embroider the piece of work and let me have it to make up in European fashion, and at her request I took my shoe off for her to see the style. She and the other ladies were so amused with my shoe; those

who had not compressed feet tried it on, and you should have seen their conscious vanity, when they put their feet into it, and found it much too large for them. They could not understand the heel being raised, as in their shoes the middle of the sole is the deepest, which causes them to walk on that part and the toes and heels of the shoes to turn up. My friend's mind was much relieved when I consented to have her present made up in Chinese fashion. I had seen the look of helpless bewilderment in her face when I suggested how the pattern should be worked for European shoes. I now begged to say adieu to my hostesses, but they would not hear of my leaving, and begged me to stay and dine with them. At first I refused, but upon being very much pressed, I consented to stay, reluctantly as regarded a second trial of Chinese food, but gladly as regarded a further insight into Chinese domestic life. I felt very tired and oppressed with the want of ventilation in the rooms in which I had passed the last two or three hours; but there was to be no rest for me yet. Mrs. Howqua took me by the hand and led me to pay a second visit to the elderly small-footed lady, who is evidently of the first rank in the house. She looked most curious as she had small round pieces of black plaister on both temples. This is a cure much resorted to by the Chinese for headache.

We sat down and were given tea, and also the seeds of the lotus plant. I could not think what I was eating until my little friend enlightened me. On my expressing approval of these seeds, the old lady gave me two or three stems of the lotus, bearing, what I will call in absence of a better term, pods. I do not much like to visit this old lady, she has such a habit of putting me through a series of cross-questions. She took out her jade earrings to show me. They were very handsome, made in the same fashion as those all the ladies wear in the south of China. Each consisted of a large gold ring, from which a circle of jadestone was suspended. The old lady evidently had great pride in these earrings, and I am sure that they were very valuable; but no inexperienced eye can discern the finest and most expensive jade from the medium qualities. These Chinese ladies wear very costly ornaments. The clusters and sprays of stones they place on the top and sides of their coiffures for full dress contain beautiful pearls which we Europeans fail to appreciate, as they are made up with the kingfisher's feathers enamelled on silver. This makes them appear false, and the large pearls lose much of their beauty by the mounting.

A very good-looking young Chinese married woman, with the smallest feet imaginable, joined

us in this old lady's room. I discovered that she was the wife of the elder brother of our host ; she said she could not receive us when we dined with her husband as she was ill at the time. She was as pleased as a child to show me her ornaments, and most anxious to examine mine. In consequence of being in mourning, I wore my jet bracelets only ; but the young lady much admired them, and wanted to exchange one of her rattan bracelets mounted in gold for one of my jet bracelets. I felt I could not accept the exchange, it would have been so much in my favour. This young lady sent her attendant for her photographs, in which she had been taken in full dress as a high mandarin's wife, and was much pleased at my saying the likeness was very good. The photographs were as highly coloured as the lady was when I saw her.

The Chinese ladies certainly do not agree with the idea " Beauty unadorned, adorned the most," for they assist nature in every possible way. This young lady's face was immensely rouged in the usual Chinese fashion. There were circular patches of the rouge by the eyebrows going up to the brow, and circular patches of it on the cheeks at some little distance from the nose. The colour is most brilliant, and no attempt is made to disguise the rouge. Her eyebrows were shaved

into a perfect arch, and pencilled ; a line was painted under her eyes, and her lips were stained with vermilion. She really was a pretty woman, with delicate straight features, and a very pretty well-formed nose. She insisted upon taking out her earrings and upon my trying them ; they were made in the double ring, the higher one in gold with grey enamel on it, the lower one in jade-stone. All the ladies in one family wear jewellery of the same pattern and value.

The one thing no man can accuse the Chinese of is love of change. The style of hair, costume, jewellery, shoes, etc., is all stereotyped. A certain set of things is worn for the summer by the ladies, and certain sets for the winter, autumn and spring. No modiste is required to set the fashions in China ; a new style of garment would be looked upon with suspicion and dislike by a Chinese lady. Sumptuary law reigns supreme here. Mr. Howqua now came into the room, and told us that dinner was ready, and we went back to the atrium leading to Mrs. Howqua's bedroom. There the table was laid exactly in the same manner as it had been for luncheon, only the dishes were more numerous. The same delay in sitting down was observed, and I tried to look modest, bowed, and by my manner asked my hostess to seat herself. But I soon gave up the contest and took my seat. We

were surrounded by amahs and slaves, and we were fanned the whole time by some young slave girls. Certainly this is very much needed in the intense heat of a Chinese summer. I was much surprised to feel something moist suddenly applied to my forehead, and on turning round I found one of the amahs had a little brush in her hand wet with some kind of cosmétique. The vigorous fanning behind me raised my hair, and caused it to look very untidy in the eyes of a Chinese woman. When the hair is arranged in the teapot style, a matter which takes some hours to complete, a brush wet with a thick cosmétique is drawn over the whole, giving it a most sticky appearance. This is renewed at intervals during the day. A Chinese lady spends daily between one and two hours before her glass whilst her amah is arranging her hair. The amah attended to my hair several times during dinner, going to the corner of the hall to fetch her little brush when my hair, recovering from the cosmétique, began to assert itself. I received the same amount of attention from my hostess as she had shown me at luncheon: my little basin was always full of various delicacies, and I had to rise several times to receive dainty morsels from the points of my friend's chopsticks. Henry had told me before that Chinese etiquette required that I should

return the attention in the same manner. But this was impossible, as I was not mistress of my chopsticks. My ineffectual efforts to convey the food to my mouth with them caused much merriment to the ladies, and young Howqua often showed me how to use them. He ate in the same voracious manner as before, and was not checked by his grandmother. One of the amahs interfered with him as he was sitting cross-legged with his feet on his chair like a young Turk. The young gentleman became furious, turned round and abused the attendant, and begged his mother to beat her for the offence.

One dish which was placed before me puzzled me much: it looked like fine grass, and when I asked the name of it, I learned that it was seaweed. It was so entangled that I could not extract a mouthful of it from the basin with my chopsticks. Without speaking to me, my particular attendant took the green tangled contents into her hands from the little bowl, divided it with her fingers, and replaced it in my basin. These amahs are accustomed to help their mistresses in this way. The last dish was rice, and my little bowl was piled up with it, and the ladies tried to teach me to eat it in true Chinese fashion. They place the basin close to the under lip, and then with closed chopsticks push the rice into

their mouths with marvellous rapidity. Mrs. Howqua told me not to be shy about it, that it was the custom for all to eat rice in this way. It was not shyness that prevented me from proving an apt pupil, but the desire not to put much of the rice into my mouth, as it was flavoured with something which gave it a pink colour and a most unpleasant taste. I had already done sufficient violence to my feelings in the various dishes of which I had partaken. With the rice a little dish was brought in containing silk-worm chrysalises boiled and served up with chilies. The pretty young lady partook of this dish in great quantities, although it was so hot in flavour that I could scarcely swallow one of the chilies. I could not bring myself to taste one of the fat, soft-looking chrysalises. This dish, so this lady informed me, is a cure for indigestion. Between the various mouthfuls of it she took a puff from a pipe held to the side of her mouth by her amah, who was placed behind her. When dinner was over we again adjourned to Mrs. Howqua's bedroom. Have I told you that there are two handsomely carved wooden bedsteads in this room, one black and one red? At this time of year there is neither mattress nor coverings on the beds, only a piece of matting laid on the bedstead, and wooden pillows. Mosquito curtains hang round

the bed. A large black wood wardrobe goes down the length of the room, and there is a table made in black wood on which is placed a high toilet glass. The seats are, in fact, high stools. After we had sat together in Mrs. Howqua's bedroom half an hour or more, I became so intensely tired that I could remain no longer, and, notwithstanding the entreaties of the ladies not to leave, I stood up resolutely and said I must put on my hat.

LETTER XIX.

CANTON, August 23rd, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I HAD neither time nor space to write all I had to say in my last budget, and could not therefore describe to you an amusing interview we had had with some Chinese ladies in our favourite retreat, the Taai-Tung-Koo-tsze monastery. On paying a certain sum of money, ladies are allowed to occupy the chief rooms for a time, and the monks, few in number as they are, retire to smaller rooms below. The object these ladies had, we found, in coming to this monastery, and remaining in it two or three days, was to worship Koon-yam, the goddess of mercy, and to pray to her for the souls of those who, having

died, have left no one behind them on earth to pray for them, and are therefore supposed to be flitting about, unappeased and angry, capable of annoying the living in every possible way. This particular worship, with its accompaniments of offerings of paper money, and paper clothes, and the letting off of a great quantity of fire-crackers, is going on in all parts of the city. These Chinese ladies, seeing us in the garden from their windows, invited us upstairs to pay them a visit. We were spending the day, as we so often do, in our garden house, which was perhaps two minutes' walk from the apartments where the ladies were staying. Henry was also allowed to go upstairs, and my little friend accompanied us. They seemed so pleased to see us, made us sit down, and waited upon us, bringing us tea, melon-seeds—which the Chinese ladies most adroitly break open with their front teeth—preserved pineapple, and cakes. These ladies did not belong to the higher rank of society like the Howqua family, but they were gentle and refined in manner. Two out of the seven had small feet. One of them decorated my hair with natural flowers, which were standing in a saucer to be used for ornamenting their coiffures. They were much amused with the fairness of my arms, comparing them with their own brown arms. One of the ladies cracked the melon-seeds for me with

her teeth (one must put away one's natural prejudices when one moves amongst a strange people), and all were most attentive to me. There is something very winning and unselfish in the way a Chinese lady behaves towards her guest; she does not seem to wonder what we foreigners think of her—her whole manner is as artless and unstudied as that of a child. They always regret that I cannot speak to them, but say, I suppose to console me, that will come "maan-maan" ("presently").

A strict fast from meat is observed whilst this worship for the souls of the uncared-for departed takes place. Certain boats, only used for religious purposes, are hired at this time by those who are anxious to join in the worship, and priests are hired to chant services for the spirits of the men who have died unwept and unhonoured. These boats are most brilliantly illuminated, when darkness has set in, from stem to stern by multitudes of lanterns, and as they glide down the river they have a fairy-like appearance. The monotonous chant of the priests sounds most Catholic, and one could fancy it was a Gregorian strain rather than a chant from the lips of heathen monks. The small lanterns are suspended in endless number from the masts and ropes, and the boat is outlined and covered with these bright-

coloured lanterns. The effect of one of these boats as it floats by our house is as of a thing of magic, and the reflection in the river is brilliant. The priests throw burning paper clothes and paper money into the river as they recite the prayers for the dead. These paper clothes and mock money are supposed to become spiritualised by the action of fire, and so to be adapted to the use of the poor, naked, craving ghosts flitting on the surface of the water. A small boat, with a fire burning in it, is rowed in front of the larger one in which the religious worship is going on, to the accompaniment of musical instruments. A gong is beaten at intervals to attract the spirits to the spot. Several smaller boats, also having fires burning in them, capable of holding one man only, are rowed by the side of the floating temple. The object of these is to show the spirits the spot where the paper clothes and paper money are being thrown into the river for their use. Oil lamps are also placed in small earthenware vessels, and float in the track of the large boat to serve as guides for the spirits. Truly, one exclaims, this is a superstitious people, wedded to their own idolatrous belief and customs!

The weather has become cooler since I last wrote to you, and we have had much rain and high winds. On the 21st, about noon, we sud-

denly heard a curious sound like that of a large steamer coming up the river. The boat population at once screamed out in fear, and talked loudly, rowing at the same time as hard as they could to the shelter of the river wall. Henry was writing at the table in the dining-room, the windows of which were as usual open to the ground. In a moment all his papers were blown off the table on to the floor. On looking out from the verandah we saw that the river was agitated into waves, and the wind was rushing madly towards us, making a wide path in the centre of the river. All was confusion. Our servants called out "Typhoon! typhoon!" (which means "large wind! large wind!"), and immediately closed all the windows and the typhoon shutters. The rain came down in torrents, and was driven before the hurricane. The noise of voices raised to a high pitch of alarm continued to increase as the boats were hurried past our windows to the creeks where the chance of safety was greater. The people vociferated as Chinese only can vociferate when any calamity takes place. We soon heard that an accident had occurred just to the left of our house: a boat had been capsized, and two children, of six and eight years of age, had been washed out of it and drowned. They were picked up by the

crew of a gig belonging to one of the steamers, and were placed on the bund close to our house. A Chinese doctor happened to be on the spot, but he could render no aid, as life was extinct in both children. Family affection is great in China,* and the mother of these children was screaming in her grief, wringing her hands, and imploring the doctor to give her back her children. This hurricane, and the same applies to all storms of wind, was supposed by the Chinese to be caused by the dragon, which inhabits the Pearl River, turning himself, and twisting his tail out of the water. One of our coolies, an intelligent man, gravely told us that yesterday, at the commencement of the storm of wind, he saw the dragon's tail lifted out of the water, and that a little boat was raised on it. Our old book coolie, however, would not subscribe to this, and when Henry questioned him he said that Chan-ashu (the coolie) might have seen the dragon, but that he believed the big wind came from heaven. So you see, even here amongst the believers in the combined teaching of Confucius and Buddha, there is a difference in points of faith. The river dragon is supposed to possess the power of keeping in durance vile a limited num-

* This assertion may seem strange after my remarks, in a preceding chapter, on infanticide. It is, nevertheless, true, and may be regarded as one of the many inconsistencies which mark the Chinese character.

ber of souls, and of calling those he desires to him. When a certain number of men are newly drowned, so many souls in proportion become free from the dragon's power, and can ascend from the water. This is one great cause why the Chinese will not help drowning people. They fear, by doing so, they might make the soul angry whose turn it is to escape from the dragon's power, and that, when it has an opportunity, it would do some harm to them.

The river dragon is much feared, and therefore much worshipped, by the population living in boats. We have since heard of other accidents caused by this mighty rush of wind. Two passenger boats, carrying a great number of people, were upset and the passengers drowned. Some houses were blown down, and the inhabitants who were in them were badly injured. It was a mercy we were not on the river at the moment. We had intended to cross over to Fa-tee to sit in our garden house, and it was arranged that Henry should go first, and Minnie and I were to follow after luncheon. Henry would certainly have been on the river at the moment of the hurricane, if a heavy shower had not preceded it, and prevented him from starting. This is a dangerous and treacherous river, and I am very nervous at times when making excursions on it. This year especially it

has been most unsafe, from the strong currents and overflowing tides. A boat was caught the other day in an eddy close to the city, and went down head foremost. I am very anxious about Henry's weekly journeys to Whampoa, and it is very late before he gets home to put my fears to rest. It has been two o'clock, and even past that hour, before he has reached Shameen, when the wind and tide have been against him. He starts from Whampoa about half-past nine P.M. He cannot take a nap, as if he were to do so his four boatmen would give in and not attempt to pull with all their remaining strength against the tide. After the storm came the calm, and we were able to cross the river (I with no feeling of security) and spend the afternoon at Fa-tee. On our return home about seven o'clock, we saw the curious ceremony of burning paper clothes and paper money in a street on the banks of the river. We rowed towards the spot, and went ashore to see what was taking place. Large piles of paper money had been burnt, and all along the river's bank in this neighbourhood I saw a row of red candles alight. I suppose there must have been two or three hundred of them. This particular worship for the souls of those who have died in the streets was given by the proprietors of a large warehouse. Before the warehouse a long table

was placed, and on it was spread a great variety of offerings in fruit and vegetables. These are exposed for a given time, during which the spiritual part is supposed to be accepted by the hungry ghosts. The material part is then taken home and provides a feast for the worshippers. We saw on our way home many of these grand illuminations and burning of paper money and clothes, taking place at intervals along the banks of the river. All this is done in honour of the spirits of the poor, and of those who have none on earth to pray for them. These ceremonies last from the 1st to the 15th day of this the seventh month of the Chinese year.

We sit out on the bund immediately opposite our house, or on our verandah, after dinner, as it is too hot to remain indoors. I am lost in admiration of the pretty fire-flies which flit about in all directions, and look like small lanterns in the distance. I enjoy our walks into the city and its suburbs as much as ever. We buy blue china in all parts of the city, and the other day found two good plates in a most curious little shop in the purlieu of the city. I am also anxious to collect some of the beautiful Chinese embroidery in silk. It is most charming in taste and design. We have a queer little man, a dealer in embroidery, who visits us at times when he has anything he

thinks will tempt us. "That work man have come," our boy says to me, and away I go at once to inspect the treasures he has brought. I generally find the queer little man, with a pipe in his mouth, sitting in the library with my husband. He displays what he has with him, and if it should be a grand embroidered coat, the ugly little one-eyed man puts it on, stretching out his arms wide so that we may see the whole pattern on it. He names his price, generally a high one, and Henry says quietly, "No can, too much money." The little man then takes his seat again and puffs at his pipe. After ten minutes' interval at least, he names a rather lower price, but most probably still too high. Sometimes we come to terms; sometimes he departs with all he has brought. Once or twice he has gone to the servants' quarters, and there waited, and after some time has sent one of the boys in to make an offer at a lower price. A great deal of the beautiful old work comes from the theatres, for they do not adopt the European custom of painting or working for effect at a distance. All is genuine and good, and the costumes and decorations in China must cost each trading guild which gets up a theatrical representation a considerable sum of money. Some of the embroidery now in our possession has been used in theatres. It looks quite fresh, and is very hand-

some. Some of it is embroidered in gold on scarlet cloth, and part of it is gold embroidery in beautiful scrolls and patterns on a black ground. I was much amused with our little Chinese friend the other day. He had brought some embroidery for us to see, and displayed it in our drawing-room over the sofa, chairs, etc. We had then just purchased some large black carved wood chairs, two for ourselves, which were placed in our drawing-room; and four others, bought for friends, stood in the dining-room. The little man's quick eye saw the new furniture, and within two or three days he brought us six beautiful red chair-back covers and seats, which were embroidered in gold. These covers and seats are used by the Chinese on fête days, and look so bright and handsome on the black wood furniture. After some discussion we purchased two of these tempting pieces of embroidery. One curious fact in Chinese furniture is the little variety one meets with in it in size and pattern. I begin to know all the devices. The chairs are either small, and so of a size for use at table, etc., or of a large size, with arms, to be used in reception halls. There was therefore no doubt about these chair-covers, which were intended to go tight over the backs and arms of the chairs, being the right size.

LETTER XX.

CANTON, August 25th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

ON the 20th inst., the state worship on occasion of the emperor's birthday took place. Henry was most anxious for me to go, as he feared that if I did not embrace the present opportunity, another might not offer. Next year the ceremony may take place on a Sunday; or we might be up the country; or something else might prevent me from seeing this worship paid to the emperor's tablet. As is always the case with special religious services in China, it was held very early in the morning, in fact at break of day, four o'clock A.M. The spirits are supposed to be more active, more inclined to hear petitions, and to be more especially present in the tablets, idols, etc., early in the day. We agreed to be called at two o'clock A.M. on Monday morning, to go down the river in a slipper boat as far as one of the city gates. A chair was to be in readiness for me there, in which I was to go to the Maan-Shau-Kuung, or Ten Thousand Years Palace. It would have been very inconvenient to go all the way in chairs on account of the closed

city gates and barricaded streets through which we should have had to pass, but by performing most of the journey by water, we only had one gate to pass through. We sent a coolie the night before (Sunday) to promise this gate-keeper a kumshaw if he would get up at two o'clock the following morning, and open the gate for us. Our plans were upset when the morning arrived, as Henry had had a very tedious row home from Whampoa against a strong tide, and did not reach the Chaplaincy until after half-past twelve. It was impossible for him to attempt another journey, he was so thoroughly prostrated by the fatigue and heat, and his heavy day's work. He would not hear of my giving up our proposed excursion, so, to prevent his attempting what I feared would make him really ill, I suggested that he should trust me with our compradore and Chong-Shing, the teacher.

When the rap came at the bedroom door at two o'clock, I must say that I heartily wished the mandarins were not so early in their habits. We started about half-past two, the two men I have mentioned, our old coolie, and I. The four boatmen in the slipper boat were equal to the duty, although they had had such a heavy pull up from Whampoa. All went smoothly. I found my chair waiting at the city gate, and I got into it.

I was much amused by a feature of extreme economy in my guides. They had started from home in their short jackets, and both carried a little parcel done up in a handkerchief. At this gate the parcel was undone and the two men put on their long coats. Although we arrived at the temple soon after three o'clock A.M., many of the inferior mandarins had already assembled and were seated in an outer court, and one or two higher class mandarins occupied their seats in the inner court. All these ceremonials are attended by the greatest amount of etiquette it is possible to conceive.

Thus the smallest man starts from his yamun at an hour long before the appointed time of the ceremony, and on leaving his residence he sends a messenger to the yamun of the mandarin next higher in rank to himself, to say that he is already on his journey. Number two then starts, knowing that the inferior will have arrived before him at the rendezvous, and be there to rise and receive him in due form. Number two on starting despatches a messenger to number three, and so on, until the greatest man is reached at last. Each fresh arrival of a higher mandarin was greeted by the mandarins already assembled, who advanced towards the entrance of the robing-room in two rows mute and motionless, whilst the bigger man

passed through them with slow and majestic gait, looking neither to the right nor left of him, but proceeding to his appointed seat, all the others following in dignified silence. A mandarin of important rank is simply inflated by pride and pomposity. His movements are all regulated by rules of etiquette. Therefore each man of equal rank is a copy of the one model. So exactly to time is the foot encased in its huge black silk boot brought forward, turned to a right angle, and then raised before being placed forward to take a majestic step, that it gives these mandarins the effect of being moved by wires. No smile is to be seen on their faces, no expression but one of stereotyped stolidity. When a mandarin seats himself on these public occasions all is again by rule. He raises his long silk coat, gradually drops into the chair, puts his feet in the first position with his knees wide apart, and generally places a hand on each knee. When finally adjusted in his chair, he raises his eyes and takes a dignified look about him, not altering a muscle of his face, nor appearing to be struck by anything he sees. The three most important men present on this occasion were the Viceroy, the Governor and the Tartar General, all mandarins of the first order, and each wearing the much coveted pale red button. The Viceroy takes precedence of

the Governor and Tartar General, and is the first man in the province. To show his importance, it was fully a quarter of an hour after the Governor had arrived before we heard sounds of his approaching procession. The temple itself presented a most fairylike appearance, dimly lighted as it now was with an immense number of oil chandeliers and coloured lanterns painted in various devices. The quadrangle immediately before the shrine which, as I told you in a previous letter, contains a fac-simile of the emperor's throne at Peking with the emperor's tablet resting on it, was lighted with hundreds of small lights. These lights, which much resembled our nightlights, were placed four in number, in receptacles, on iron rods which hung from the roof of the cloister surrounding the quadrangle. As no mandarin is considered high enough in rank to enter the shrine itself to worship the tablet, it is in the centre of the quadrangle that the ceremony is performed.

I had been immensely interested in all that was going on around me during the hour of delay before the worship began, in watching the mandarins receiving each other—at walking over to the other side of the quadrangle to see the military mandarins. Two of these were of the first rank and sat on a dais at the end of their robing-room, looking as pompous as man can look. There was

a great hurrying to and fro of attendants, who swarmed in the quadrangle. The lowest mandarins have twenty, and mandarins of the first rank, one hundred attendants. Servants brought into the quadrangle large wooden chests, suspended from their shoulders on bamboo poles, containing suits of mourning apparel for the mandarins. This curious custom is observed on the supposition that the Emperor might possibly die whilst the ceremony is taking place, and so provides that in this case the mandarins should go home in mourning garments. Other boxes carried in by servants contained court hats worn by the mandarins only at the time the ceremony is being performed. In other boxes I saw teapots, cups and saucers, pipes, etc. The mandarins wear their handsome full court dress on this occasion. The skirt is dark blue silk beautifully embroidered in silk and gold thread; a tippet is also worn, which is much ornamented with gold embroidery. The hat, which is the ordinary pointed official hat, is trimmed fully with a deep fringe of red floss silk, and surmounting the apex is that distinguishing mark of rank, the coloured pear-shaped button.

Every official present rose as the clash of musical instruments announced the near approach of the Viceroy. In two or three minutes he arrived,

alighted from his State chair, and passed up the centre of the long row of mandarins standing by the entrance of the robing-room, in the centre of which the Governor was waiting to receive him. The two great men chin-chinned each other, and passed up together to the raised dais at the end of the room, and seated themselves simultaneously. The twelve mandarins varying from the first to the fourth rank took their seats on benches arranged down the sides of the room, where they had already passed the last hour or more smoking and chatting together, when not required to go to the entrance to welcome a higher brother-official. These robing-rooms were open to the quadrangle, so that from where I stood I could see all that passed in them. The court hats, tippets, and skirts were now put on by the mandarins with the assistance of their attendants. The three great men then walked slowly into the quadrangle, followed by all the mandarins according to their rank. The Viceroy, Governor, and Tartar General placed themselves side by side before the first three kneeling-mats in the centre of the quadrangle, and the other mandarins arranged themselves in order of precedence behind them. A band of musical instruments accompanying them, ceased playing when all had taken their places; and the master of the ceremonies, standing on

the highest step to the right of the shrine, gave the word for the ceremony to commence. It was this : " Advance, kneel, knock the head." An inferior mandarin first advanced, and after three repeated kau-taus withdrew. He was supposed to make the offerings to the emperor, which were already placed on the altar before the tablet. The voice of the master of the ceremonies was heard a second time, and now the Viceroy, Governor, Tartar General and every mandarin present, solemnly advanced their left feet forward at the same moment, took them back, then advanced their right feet, knelt on both knees, and bending their heads knocked them three times on the ground. All the company of mandarins then rose, rested a minute until the shrill voice of command was again heard, when they all went through the same genuflections. They again rose and for the third time bent the knee and performed the kau-tau. When the three times three had been performed, the whole assembly left the quadrangle in regular order, and each mandarin returned to his appointed place. The centre shrine was a blaze of light: large chandeliers lighted it inside, and little lanterns were hung under the broad roof along the façade of the building. The doors were wide open, and the imperial tablet, the object of worship, was thus

visible to all. As I have already described it and its inscription, I will not say more about it now. I was standing the whole time of the ceremony on the granite steps which occupy the centre of the quadrangle, having the Viceroy and Governor immediately on my left, the Tartar General and some mandarins on my right hand.

I returned now with my guides, and took up my position in front of the robing-room. I saw the high officials disrobe, remove their court hats, and put on their ordinary mandarin hats; they then sat down, tea was handed, and they chatted together. In a short time I heard some steps behind me, and on turning round I saw the procession of the Tartar General and military mandarins, who had left their robing-room, and were advancing to salute the Viceroy, Governor, etc. The two latter rose to receive their guests, chin-chinned them, and placed the Tartar General on the daïs. You cannot, without seeing it for yourself, fully understand the manner of these officials. It is self-contained, dignified, pompous, intensely quiet, and brimful of etiquette.

You will wonder how the crowd had behaved to me all this time, and how I had been able, the only woman present, to stand amongst them. Well, the truth is that they took no notice of me at all. All had come to see the ceremony, or to

wait on their masters, and I escaped with little observation. Our compradore now said to me, "More better you go that side, 'spose you wantchee see allo that largee mandarin go." So I got into my chair, and was carried to a quiet spot to wait and see the processions of the different officials as they left the temple. But first, I have forgotten to say I had a look at an open-air theatre, which was temporarily placed in the outer court of the temple, where a play was being performed whilst the religious ceremony was being held in the temple itself. This play represented an emperor bestowing honours and rewards upon his faithful ministers of state.

There were nine actors on the stage. A throne was erected, and an actor, grandly dressed, representing the emperor, was seated on it, and in a high falsetto key was speechifying. No doubt he was giving some excellent advice. The other actors were arranged on each side of this personage, and were moving about in true dignified, pompous, mandarin style. After waiting in my chair for half an hour, gongs announced the approach of some of the officials from the temple. Several mandarins passed me in succession, each accompanied by many attendants, varying in number according to the rank of their masters. Then came the chief

procession. Words fail me to describe the extraordinary appearance of these cavalcades. At the head of each came men bearing huge lanterns with the titles painted on them of the great man to whom they belonged; then there were ragged boys carrying the insignia of rank, silk flags, and painted boards with titles upon them in raised characters. Then equerries, who were handsomely dressed in silk robes and mounted on ponies, passed by. The ponies were but poor creatures, very thin, with their bones nearly coming through the skin, the fat riders in their flowing robes looking very caricatures on their sorry brutes. Then came the military; do not picture to yourself European troops when I mention these. Their legs and feet were bare, and they wore red or red and blue tunics and trousers, very shabby in appearance; their hats I cannot describe, except by saying that some of them were in shape like a tall European hat, only these were made in transparent lattice-work of bamboo. Others wore headdresses still more difficult to describe. They were made of gold tinsel in the shape of crowns; from the sides of the highest part rose two long argus pheasant feathers, more than four feet in length, made longer than nature intended by being mounted on to wire ends. Picture to yourself this costume, this theatrical

headgear, the owner in shabby tunic and red trousers just past the knee, bare-legged, and having no shoes.

The whole struck me as like a pantomime, and appeared still more grotesque as daylight now began to appear. You know we have no dawn here; as the sun rises, so day begins. The lanterns were extinguished, and I saw the members of the procession in their true unvarnished light. And now came the Viceroy in his chair of state borne by twelve men. He sat with arms raised on the shelves beside him, and his head thrown forward. His stolid expression was preserved. The procession was closed by more mandarins on horseback, attendants bearing flags, insignia, etc. I have not yet mentioned my early ramble in the city to any of the European community. I fear they may think me strong-minded; and what is the use of speaking of these things to those who take no interest in the manners and customs of the singular people among whom they dwell?

LETTER XXI.

CANTON, August 30th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I ALWAYS have so much to describe when I sit down to write you an account of what I have

seen in the city, that I must necessarily omit much. As we are going along the streets I feel engrossed in all I see around me, and I am often calling upon Henry for an explanation. This is rather difficult, as, if we are in chairs, it takes some time for me to make the coolies ahead stop, and we often have passed the particular spot or shop before I can make Henry hear. If we are walking we are rarely side by side. The streets are so very much crowded and there is seldom room for us to be together ; if we walk abreast for a few minutes, we are sure to be interrupted by an itinerant pork-seller, fishmonger, or some man carrying a burden, who cries out, "Clear the way." Very often it is a chair for which you have to stand on one side, the coolies sometimes calling out "Make way, a great physician is in our chair, who is on his road to see a dying patient." This cry Henry knows to be not strictly true at all times, as the coolies have resorted to it when carrying him in haste to some particular spot. The streets are also a snare to me: I have to look where I am going, for the granite slabs by which they are paved are most uneven ; in fact there is no pretence at using any particular sized blocks of stone ; so if one is not careful one may catch one's heel in a piece of stone standing high above its neighbour. The bridges

are numerous in the city, and are generally approached by steep stone steps. They please me very much by their quaintness, and the Chinese in their large pointed crowned hats, their tails, and flowing robes, look most picturesque as they cross them. They are most varied in design, some being very much raised in the centre, others flat. In one of our walks, a few days ago, we saw a great many of the sights which came in our way, and we spent the day in the city and its suburbs. The first halt was made at a Chinese dispensary, where three or four native physicians give advice gratis from eight A.M. to two P.M. daily. A ticket is handed to each patient, which is given up by him on receiving advice. Small sums of money and rice are also given here, to aged and poor widows. Four free schools also receive pecuniary assistance from this dispensary, and coffins too are provided for paupers. On coming out of the dispensary we saw a group of men playing at cards in the street. The players were squatting on the ground with a board in front of them, and men interested in the game were looking on. The cards used by Chinese, and with which they play a great variety of games, are about the same length as European cards, but they are very narrow, being scarcely an inch in width.

I have often seen groups of men playing at cards in the streets, and so absorbed were they in their



CARD-PLAYING IN THE STREETS.

games as to be utterly regardless of the busy crowds around them. We went into one of

the opium divans which is close to the dispensary, and saw men in all stages of stupor from smoking the drug. It was a most revolting sight, and I turned with disgust from the man who was supplying the opium to these poor creatures. Wooden couches are placed round the room, upon which these infatuated men lie and inhale the poisonous drug. Many of them had a most attenuated appearance. When once opium smoking has become a confirmed habit, the victim is utterly wretched if he, by any circumstance, should be unable to indulge in his opium pipe at the customary hours. When walking along the streets the other day, we met a man who had evidently been deprived of his opium pipe beyond the usual time; his distress was most evident, and as he went along towards the opium divan his moaning was most painful to hear. We walked on afterwards to see the beautiful French cathedral, which was begun in 1863 and is not yet completed. It is built of granite, and is a noble specimen of Perpendicular Gothic. One is surprised to find this fine cathedral within the walls of the heathen city. There are schools and an orphanage in connection with it. The present bishop has resided in Canton upwards of thirty years, and is much beloved by his co-religionists. The French cathedral, schools,

etc., occupy the site on which the palace of the Viceroy Yeh formerly stood. In marked contrast to the cathedral was the building which we next visited, a whitewashed dissenting chapel with bare walls, most uninviting to the passers-by. It must be difficult for the Chinese convert, accustomed as he has been to a high ritual, to much decoration in the temple, and to the giving of his substance for the worship of his gods, to understand the motive which influences these Christians to worship God in a meagre house of prayer which costs them as little as possible, and is as plain as hands can make it. On leaving this chapel we entered the old city, and passed through the street called by Europeans the Bird-cage Walk, in which, as the name suggests, are several shops where birds of various kinds and ornamental bird-cages are sold. I have bought here lately some canaries, Java sparrows, two small birds called nuns, with brown bodies and black heads, two kingfishers, and a blue jay. These feathery creatures, excepting the last two, which are in cages by themselves, are now in my large aviary. We now entered a street called the Street of Four Monumental Arches, in which we saw five rather than four of these arches, all of them raised to the memory of men celebrated in their day either for learning, virtue, valour, filial piety, or longevity.

Monumental arches in China take the place of public statues in European cities, and are generally made of granite, but sometimes of red sandstone or brick. They are built in the form of a triple arch, having in the centre a large gate, and a smaller one on each side. An inscription is placed on a slab in the centre of the large arch, informing passers-by to whose honour the arch is erected. On a small slab, in a prominent position on the arch, are two characters which set forth that it is built by imperial decree. Having examined these monumental arches, which are now hemmed in at the sides by shops, we passed on and entered the Temple of the Five Genii.* These worthies are supposed to have entered the city of Canton riding on rams, and dressed in different coloured robes. On passing through one of the markets they are reported to have said, "May famine never visit the markets of this city," and then they winged their flight through the air. Five stones found near the spot were supposed, from their resemblance to the rams, to be the petrified remains of those animals, and eventually they were removed to this temple. They are arranged at the feet of five well-executed idols, represent-

*. These genii are supposed to represent the five elements, viz., fire, earth, water, metal, and wood.

ing the five genii. These idols sit in a row in a large shrine, and are coloured so as to resemble life. Votaries worship here, especially in the fourth month of the Chinese year, when they come to return thanks to these gods for restored health. These votaries then wear a red dress similar to a Chinese prisoner's dress; round their necks are chains, fetters are on their ankles, and handcuffs of iron round their wrists. These strange observances are supposed to indicate humility on the part of the worshippers. In front of this shrine stands the Great Bell Tower. The Chinese and Tartars are most superstitious in regard to the bell which hangs in this tower, and believe that it has not been struck, since it was cast in 1368, without bringing disaster to the city. An epidemic which caused the death of a thousand children was attributed to this bell having been inadvertently struck. In 1845 the tower having fallen into ruin had to be rebuilt, and the workmen were enjoined not to let the bell be struck as they lowered it to the ground. But with all their caution it sounded out its doleful voice, and the consequence of this was a great mortality amongst the Tartars, and also a fire in a theatre, by which three thousand men died. Again in 1865 it was struck by a falling shot from H.M.S. *Encounter*, and the Chinese attributed

the subsequent capture of the city by the allies to this sound of ill-omen.

In one of the courtyards of this temple I saw an impression, on a basaltic rock partly covered with water, resembling the print of a human foot, which is supposed by the Chinese to be the impression of Buddha's foot. You will be amused to hear that there is a small shrine here in honour of a monkey god. He is said to have been formed from a rock, and to have been hatched during the day by the heat of the sun, and during the night by the warmth of the moon. He became in time the king of all monkeys, and, learning the art of speaking, he was associated with man, and eventually taken into the service of Buddha. We went from this temple into the yamun in which the great Viceroy Yeh was captured in 1858 by British sailors. Close to this yamun is the Confucian Temple, approached by a triple gateway built of red stone. In the courtyard I saw an artificial pond, in the form of a crescent, which is spanned by a bridge of three arches. I learnt from Henry that water is always placed in the precincts of a Confucian temple. It denotes purity, and therefore is supposed to be an emblem of the virtue of the sage and of the purity of the doctrines he taught. In the shrine which stands at the end of the

quadrangle an idol of Confucius has been placed contrary to the express teaching of the sage, who was much opposed to graven images. It is more usual to find a red tablet only in a Confucian temple, with the name of Confucius recorded on it in letters of gold. A long cloister runs down the length of the quadrangle, and contains small shrines, in honour of the seventy-two disciples of Confucius who shone with pre-eminence out of the number of his three thousand followers. In the inner quadrangle of the temple a shrine is dedicated to the parents and grandparents of Confucius. The Chinese not only honour a great man himself, but they extend their worship to his progenitors, as they consider it is owing to their care and skill that the illustrious man is indebted for his greatness. We went into a small shrine dedicated to the memory of virtuous women, which is opposite to the Confucian temple. Here we saw many wooden tablets arranged on shelves, which bore the names of women who had spent their lives in single blessedness. A granite arch is raised to their honour and stands in the courtyard of the shrine. Other tablets in this shrine record the names of those whose affianced husbands died before the marriage day had arrived, and who passed the rest of their lives in a state of virginity. Other tablets are in honour of widows who refused to

marry a second time, or who on the death of their husbands committed suicide, not choosing to survive them. The latter form of suicide is still regarded as meritorious by the Chinese.

We next visited the Mohammedan mosque which greatly resembles Chinese temples in its architecture. It was built by an Arabian in 620, who is said, in Chinese annals, to have been a younger brother of the mother of the prophet Mahomet. As the walls of the mosque are painted red, it must have been erected by the sanction of the Chinese emperor then reigning. It is a plain building, bearing above the sanctum sanctorum the first line of the Koran in large Arabic characters, "There is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet." The pulpit is of wood, and a staff is placed near it upon which the preacher leans as he delivers his sermons. The emperor's tablet stands on an altar in the mosque, and Mohammedans* are compelled by Chinese law to burn incense before this tablet, and to worship it. The law commands that this worship to the tablet of the emperor shall be paid in every Buddhist, Taoist and Mohammedan temple in the country. I saw the minaret in the courtyard which was formerly used by the muezzins, who ascended it and

* It is computed that not less than 30,000,000 of Chinese have embraced the Mohammedan faith.

proclaimed from its summit the hour of prayer. It has now fallen into decay. The limit of our excursion this day was the five-storied pagoda, which is built on the heights above Canton. On our way there we turned aside into the street called Chi-Hong-Kai, and entered a small temple to see the prophetic stone which is supposed to reflect, when gazed upon by those who consult it, what the future has in store for them. Women chiefly visit this temple, and all classes are to be seen here, many of whom consult the stone to know if there is any probability of their earnest longing to become mothers of male children being gratified.

We afterwards passed the Flowery Pagoda. I must describe this most beautiful pagoda to you, as it is one I so much admire and have often seen. It is nine storeys in height; it was built A.D. 505, and was intended as a shrine to hold some relic of Buddha. The original idea in building pagodas was to represent the many mansions into which the Buddhistical paradise is divided. The most virtuous when they die are supposed, as Buddhas, to inhabit the highest place for millions or billions of years—those who are less renowned for their good deeds are supposed to occupy the lower storeys. Now, however, pagodas are erected by the Chinese for the purpose of exerting a good geo-

mantic influence over the country. Thus, the fields in the neighbourhood of a pagoda are supposed to produce good and abundant crops of grain; the rivers which flow past it to abound with fish; young men who live in its neighbourhood to be successful at the literary examinations; and peace to prevail throughout the surrounding districts. We went on to the foot of a hill, getting out of our chairs to walk up the long flight of steps leading to the temple dedicated to Koon-Yam. The idol of this goddess is clothed, and in this respect differs from most of the idols in the city. Her dress is handsomely embroidered. One curious custom is observed in this temple. Tradesmen, principally of the humbler kind, as hawkers, barbers, etc., come to it on the 26th day of the first month of the Chinese year, to borrow money from the goddess, as they consider it fortunate to trade with her capital. If the monks of this temple advance five hundred cash to one of these votaries, he must deposit security for six hundred cash, and on the same day in the following year must repay the sum borrowed with a few cash in addition. Men beginning business after the new year consider that money borrowed from this goddess brings luck to them. We then walked on to the Ng-Tsang-Lau, or Pagoda of Five Storeys, which stands on the north wall of the

city. It is more properly speaking a square tower, and is quite different in shape to the other pagodas in and about the city. It is built of red sandstone or brick, and is a wide building, having five very spacious chambers. I mounted the different storeys, and enjoyed a fine view of the city from the summit. It was here from a temporary scaffold, which was erected on the roof of the tower, that the illustrious Yeh watched the proceedings of his army, with the rebel forces. During the war which took place between China and the allied armies of England and France, companies of French and English troops on taking Canton were quartered in this tower. We were obliged now to get into our chairs and hurry home through the city, darkness having fallen upon us. You cannot picture to yourself what the streets are like at this hour of night. The shops are closed, and in some cases are barricaded by long beams. In the principal streets only, small oil lamps hang at intervals from a beam placed across the street; and before the chief shops are large oiled paper lanterns, bearing the name of the hong on one side, and the name of a tutelary deity on the other. These lanterns are most picturesque, varying in size, and shape, and in the characters painted on them; some are very large, others very small. They impart to the streets a

most oriental appearance, and it is always a source of interest to me to pass through them when they are lighted up. It is a most curious sight, when entering a long street, to look up it, and see the various coloured lanterns hanging in all directions.

At intervals one comes upon the city watchmen, who group themselves round paper lanterns placed on tripods, with their old-fashioned large weapons piled near them.

The smaller streets are left to darkness, excepting where paper lanterns hang before the doors of shops, or still larger ones hang before private houses, but these are extinguished by half-past nine P.M.

As we go through these silent, dimly-lighted deserted streets, the footsteps of our chair coolies, and the curious sound they make, a kind of humph! humph! humph! (really a grunting noise), awake the silent echoes. A man every now and then passes us, or perhaps a blind singing girl led by an old woman who conducts and takes care of her. The singer is beautifully dressed, and her hair is bedecked with flowers. Her guide beats castanets to let the inmates of the closed houses know that she and her companion are at hand to be engaged if required. Sometimes the master of a shop calls the girl in to sing to his apprentices, as they work

up to a late hour, for, although the shutters are closed, the busy Chinese tradesmen are not idle.

Our way home, this night, led us through a street called Ooi-Sin-Kai, the greater part of which is occupied by blacksmiths. They were working late, and owing to the glare of their furnaces the whole street appeared to be in a blaze. I observed in passing these smithies that instead of two smiths only working together at an anvil, as in England, there were three here, two of whom were using large hammers, and the third a small hammer. Sometimes blacksmiths work in the open air under a wide spreading mat umbrella as represented in the illustration annexed.

The Chinese require little sleep, and can work late and rise early. I noticed the other day, during one of our early rambles in the city, that the pork butchers were astir before three o'clock A.M.

LETTER XXII.

CANTON, September 5th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

HEARING that the military examinations were taking place on the Eastern Parade Ground,



BLACKSMITHS WORKING IN THE OPEN AIR.

we made up our minds to go and see part of the proceedings. We took our boat up the river within sight of the large parade ground on which the examination was being held. When we arrived, there were many spectators gathered together, and a large marquee had been erected at the end of the field for the examiners and their attendants.

The whole scene reminded me of a country race in England. When we went on to the ground, it was about eleven o'clock A.M., and a pause in the programme was taking place to allow the officials, who were conducting the examination, an opportunity of taking their luncheon. We looked round for a shelter from the hot sun, which was really scorching, and also to free ourselves from a crowd of Chinese who were most anxious to inspect us. We saw a mat shed a little ahead of us, and near it, the beautiful Imperial yellow grounded flag, with the dark blue dragon, waved in the air. This made it evident that some official was the occupant of the tent. When we were opposite the entrance of it, we saw a mandarin sitting inside, but he made no sign for us to enter the tent. As the desire for shelter was pressing much upon us, we walked in, and having overcome all shyness in this attempt, we proceeded to seat ourselves on stools which stood behind the inhospit-

able official. The mandarin preserved his usual stolid expression, and took no notice of us for some time. The crowd, however, began to press in at the door, in order to gratify their curiosity, upon which the mandarin made a movement with his hand towards his two attendants to drive the tiresome men and boys away. But they were determined to stare at us, so they went round to the back of the tent and proceeded to pull off a portion of the dried palm-leaves of which it was made, and when I turned round I saw dozens of dark eyes peeping through the holes. A number of them also had climbed up a bamboo division in the tent, which separated the part where we were sitting from that in which the mandarin's chair had been placed. This was too much for the imperturbable official. He rose without saying a word, walked out of the tent, and left the nest to the cuckoos who had taken such forcible possession of it. At last we heard the sounds of a trumpet, which, judging from its gruff sound, must have been a very old instrument. The man who blew it was one of the city guard, and was dressed in the most singular, and most ragged style you can imagine.

He looked as if he had dressed himself to take a part in some pantomime. When this trumpet gave forth its uncertain muffled sound the doors at the back of the marquee, which had been

closed on our arrival, were thrown open, and the prefect and deputy prefect advanced and took their places behind two tables covered with red cloth. These tables were placed in front of the marquee. The whole scene reminded me of pictures I had seen before leaving home of Chinese ceremonials. A numerous staff of attendants, wearing a most solemn expression on their faces, stood behind their respective masters, and formed a row two deep. The crowd of spectators stood in two thick lines in front, leaving a long passage clear for the prefect and his deputy to see what was taking place. When these mandarins came in and seated themselves, we were standing very near them, and Henry with much parade took off his hat and bowed first to the official at the one table, and then to the second at the other table. They returned the salute by bowing in a most stately manner. The examination now re-commenced by men shooting arrows as they rode at full speed down a short course or rather trench made for that purpose. Three large white targets were placed at intervals down this path.

At the sound of a gong a little pony was led forth, bright with high embroidered saddle, and trappings.

A young man then appeared (one of the

candidates), dressed in a long silk coat, a broad black sash round his waist, and wearing high black satin boots. Two attendants sprang forward, hoisted him on to the high saddle, on the mean-looking pony's back, helping him up in a most undignified manner, to our eyes at least. They caught hold of the band of his wide sash and by this means settled him on the saddle. The stirrups were so extremely short that the young man's feet were nearly even with the saddle, and his position on horseback looked most cramped. Directly he was seated, he bent forward, so low that his face nearly touched the pony's mane. He put himself into a studied attitude, his elbows high, a bow stretched to the full extent in his hands and an arrow adjusted on it (the figure of the young man, at this time, was that of a spread eagle), and then he started on his gallop, the attendants urging the pony forward. The young man discharged an arrow at each target as he passed, and a gong was sounded behind the particular target when an arrow pierced it.

When the candidate had ridden to the end of the trench, he returned preserving the same cramped position, and as he came near to the marquee he shouted out his name. An official stationed at the entrance of the tent turned towards the two tables, and in a loud voice re-

peated the name of the candidate, and gave the number of successful hits. Each of the examiners then placed the numbers against the particular name which was on a list before him. The candidate was now helped off the pony by his attendants, who, taking hold of the silk sash, lifted him down from his most uncomfortable-looking saddle. He then walked up to the official tables, carrying his bow and horse-whip in his hand, and stopping in front of them, bowed with bended knees, first to the official on the left, then to the one on the right. The examiners returned the salutation by inclining their heads slightly with majestic gravity. Some of the candidates were quite young men, and some middle-aged. They ranged from about sixteen to forty-five years of age.

If unsuccessful at the one examination, they can try again and again. The social rank of the candidates varied much. Military degrees are open to all, and when obtained they give a man a *locus standi* in his town or village. Some of the candidates were most gaily arrayed in pale lavender, pale yellow or other coloured long coats, and silk leggings, in endless variety of colour, which generally harmonised well with the costume. Others were very plainly dressed and were evidently of inferior social position, as they

wore the ordinary black shoes, and not the long satin boots. Each competitor has to ride over the course three times during the day, and so discharges nine arrows. There were hundreds and hundreds of candidates present, but only a limited number of those who have the highest number of marks can obtain a degree.

These examinations are held every three years. We afterwards went to another part of the ground and saw men lifting heavy weights, and turning heavy weapons in every direction over their heads, behind their backs, etc. Two examiners were sitting in a building close to the spot, and marking down failure or success.

We did not stay long, as we felt tired, from the excessive heat of the day, so we returned home intending to revisit the parade ground at another stage of the military examinations. Two days after we carried out our intention, and were present when the candidates shot, on foot, at targets placed at a great distance. After they had discharged nine arrows, they went before the examiners, who sat behind tables, surrounded by mandarins of lesser rank and an endless number of attendants. The candidates were then given strong bows, which they were required to pull out to the fullest extent; and if they succeeded in this feat, a still stronger bow was handed to

them upon which to try their strength. We stayed some time watching this part of the examination, and then went on and saw those who had successfully passed in shooting with arrows, engaged in lifting massive iron javelins, turning them round and round their bodies. They also lifted immense blocks of stone. In some cases, very powerful men knelt on one knee and raised these ponderous stones first on to the one thigh, then on to the other, and eventually on to their chests. But I noticed that many failed in these feats of strength.

On the way to our boat from the parade ground, I was much amused, as I always am, by watching several very young girls and boys with babies strapped on to their backs. When these young people are engaged in play, they seem utterly to forget their living burdens, and one fears for the safety of the poor little babies. At times, when we pass through villages, the boys and girls, in their fright at the sudden appearance of Europeans, take to their heels and scamper away, and then the babies on their backs appear to be in imminent danger.

Another source of amusement to me, this afternoon, was seeing two little children in our sampan with small wooden buoys bound to their backs. This singular method is adopted by Chinese boat



GIRLS CARRYING CHILDREN ON THEIR BACKS.

women to save their children from drowning, should they fall into the water. The family group in the boat was completed by a baby which was strapped on to its mother's back, as she sculled, and by a child of two years old, who was tied by a long piece of cord to one of the bamboo supports of the roof of the boat. This child reminded me of a dog in its kennel.

LETTER XXIII.

CANTON, August 9th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

SINCE I wrote my descriptive letter about the military examinations, Henry and I have again made a very early excursion into the city, to see the imposing ceremony of the autumnal State worship paid to Confucius. We left the Chaplaincy at the very early and trying hour of 2.45 A.M., and went by boat to the Ma-tau landing-place, and proceeded thence to the chief Confucian temple, where the ceremony was to be held. Henry had written the day before to ask M. Sales, the French Vice-Consul, to be so kind as to request the mandarin to have the great east gate of the city, which is near to his consulate, opened for us. We obtained the permission, but had no idea at the time that we were really

asking a favour difficult to be granted. We had chairs in readiness for us at this gate, and arrived at the temple at four o'clock. The precincts of the temple were already crowded by Chinese gentlemen and their attendants, who, like ourselves, had come to see the State worship. A long time before we reached the temple we saw numerous lanterns arranged on tripods, and groups of the city guard sitting on the ground around them. I need not describe the arrival of the mandarins according to order of rank, their ceremonious reception of each other, the greatest man of all, the Viceroy, again keeping all waiting for him, as I have described a similar scene in a former letter. The large shrine, which was brilliantly illuminated, contained the offerings presented on this day to Confucius. We went into the shrine to see them, and a strange sight presented itself to our view. In front of the altar, behind which is the niche, holding the tablet bearing the name of Confucius, the whole carcass of an ox, from which the hair had been scraped, was placed in a sitting posture on a raised platform. It looked as though it were alive. The hair had been left on its long tail. A ring was passed through the nose of the animal to which a cord was attached. It was an ugly sight. Other offerings were also of a curious kind, especially so

the carcasses of sheep and pigs. These were not placed upon the side altars, until the moment before the arrival of the Viceroy, a precaution taken, we considered, to prevent their being stolen. Very ancient musical stringed instruments were arranged down the right side of the shrine, which were in use in the time of Confucius. No one now knows how to play them, but on this particular night, bachelors of music, wearing long blue academic robes edged with black, stood before them, and made a pretence of bringing out sounds from their long unused keys. In a corner close by, the same farce was enacted with some wind instruments belonging to the same ancient period. Again in front of these old instruments ancient bells were suspended from a wooden platform, and were struck by some bachelors of music to the accompaniment of two huge drums on either side of the shrine. These players lead and regulate the religious worship. The Viceroy and the Tartar General were, in the meantime, robing, and chin-chinning each other. Some mandarin in authority had seen us pass up to the shrine, and had given orders for one of his official attendants to accompany us. This officer was most attentive to us, and gave us the best position possible for seeing the ceremony. And now the mandarins walked towards the front

of the shrine in procession, the Viceroy and the Tartar General first, the others following in order, to the accompaniment of a band of music. The civil mandarins arranged themselves on one side of the great quadrangle, the military mandarins on the other. As before, a master of ceremonies gave the word of command throughout the proceedings. The kau-tau was first performed simultaneously by all the civil and military mandarins present, then the Viceroy and the Tartar General left the quadrangle, and the Viceroy went up the steps on the left, the Tartar General up the steps on the right leading to the shrine. No man, save the Emperor, may go up the centre stairs leading direct to the shrine of the great Confucius. The two high officials moved with much deliberation and dignity, each taking a step at the same moment as the other, for fear one might be a little in advance of the other. Each was accompanied by a bachelor of arts, and by a conductor of ceremonies. At this moment the scene was most impressive. Two flambeaux placed on the tops of poles, wrapped in scarlet cloth, blazed high, and threw a brilliant light upon the outer court of the shrine, in the centre of which stood about forty young boys dressed as bachelors of arts. They were thus dressed in right of being the sons of those who had attained that degree. In

their hands they held thick plumes made of the very long tail feathers of the argus pheasant. The Viceroy on arriving at the shrine advanced to the chief altar, while the Tartar General took his position at a side altar. The immense drums were beaten, instruments of various kinds, which were placed at the end of the shrine, sent out most curious and noisy sounds, and whilst this din of music was heard, the great men knelt and did the kau-tau to the directions of the master of ceremonies, delivered in a shrill chanting key. But before the Viceroy and the Tartar General knelt in worship, one of the bachelors of arts presented, amidst solemn silence, an offering to the tablet, which was contained in a sandal-wood box, and which had been carried into the shrine raised high above the heads of the bearers. This form of holding anything above the head denotes the greatest mark of respect to the thing thus carried. The box was then passed on to a second bachelor of arts, who placed it upon the altar. Then the kau-tau took place. The Viceroy and the Tartar General, having performed this act of worship, returned to their positions in the quadrangle; one at the head of the civil, the other at the head of the military mandarins. The forty young boys bearing the plumes of feathers then prostrated

themselves. Nine times the two great men walked up with solemn step to the shrine, the Viceroy sometimes making his kau-tau and offerings at the chief altar, sometimes at a lesser altar. The last three times he made his offerings at the three small altars at the left of the shrine, while the Tartar General finished his three final acts of worship at the three small altars to the right of the shrine. Here I was standing, and I had to move on one side to enable him to kneel before the last altar. The offerings consisted of wine presented in old classic-shaped brass vessels, and of cakes. The Viceroy came up the steps leading to the shrine alone on one occasion, and presented a folded letter, written on yellow paper, to Confucius. A mandarin, kneeling by the Viceroy's side, opened the letter and read it aloud, solemn silence being observed by the crowd. After it had been read, and the kau-tau performed by the Viceroy, the mandarin, holding the letter, advanced to the chief altar, and, presenting it to Confucius, laid it on the altar. There it remained until the ceremony was over. It was then removed by the same mandarin, who carried it in both hands high above his head, and was thrown by him into the sacred fire in the outer quadrangle. After the Viceroy had completed his ninth visit to the shrine,

he, the Tartar General, and all the mandarins left the quadrangle and returned to the robing rooms. We had been most fortunate in our position within the shrine. This was of course owing to Henry, who is well known to all the high officials, as he has been so constantly present at their grand ceremonials. Had I been placed at a distance, I should have lost a great part of the observances in the shrine itself; as it was, I was simply amongst the chief actors. This is the grandest ceremonial I have yet seen, and although it occupied a long time, it seemed too short for the interest that was crowded into the space of an hour or more whilst the State worship took place.

LETTER XXIV.

CANTON, September 16th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

WE were awoke most unexpectedly this morning at six o'clock by Chong-shing rapping at our bedroom door, and upon Henry inquiring the cause, he was told that the B.A. degree was to be conferred that day upon the successful candidates in the late military examination. As Chong-shing proceeded to inform us that the ceremony

was to begin at seven o'clock, we hurried up, took a hasty cup of tea, and were in a slipper boat *en route* for the Literary Chancellor's yamun at seven o'clock. The tide was in our favour, and in a short time we arrived at the landing stage near the south gate of the city. A mile's walk brought us in sight of the yamun. Standing near it were many chairs ornamented with strips of needlework. The names of the successful candidates, to whom these chairs belonged, were printed on strips of red paper which were pasted in a conspicuous position on them.

As we entered the gates of the yamun, which were thrown open for us, a very gay scene presented itself to our view.

Numbers and numbers of the successful candidates were assembled there, dressed in long bright blue tunics, which were made in silk or cotton, to suit the circumstances of the wearer. The tunics were edged at the bottom of the skirt, the neck and the sleeves with a border of black. Brilliant wide bands, made in a bright shade of red silk, were worn across the chest and back of the Bachelors of Arts, and hung down in long ends in front. These were ornamented with immense rosettes made in red silk. Tippetts made in the same blue as the tunics, richly embroidered and edged with gold, were also worn.

All had on long black satin boots. But their festive appearance culminated in their hats, which were made in the ordinary mandarin pointed shape, trimmed with fringes of red floss silk. The grand decoration peculiar to the day consisted of two long sprays of silver and gold leaves with little balls of red floss silk, to represent flowers, placed between the leaves which were worn on the points of the hats. These hats will be worn by the graduates on all public occasions, on all high festivals, and on their marriage days. As it was evident that the ceremony was not likely to commence for some little time, we went to the same room we had occupied on one of the former occasions, and were invited to take seats there by some small mandarins. We remained here for at least an hour. Punctuality is a virtue unknown amongst Chinese officials.

All was in readiness and every one waiting, before the sound of a drum, and a movement amongst the crowd, announced the fact that the Literary Chancellor * was on his way to take his seat behind the table placed immediately in front of the private entrance gates of his yamun.

* It is the duty of the Literary Chancellor to confer the B.A. degree on all who pass the military examinations as well as on those who pass the literary examinations.

These gates had amused me much. They bore huge coloured representations of the Ki-lun, a fabulous quadruped. During the long delay, whilst we sat in the room at the side of the yamun, used by the aides-de-camp of the chancellor, Henry spoke to some of the mandarins, in the court dialect, and was pleased at being able to understand so much that was said. The officers appeared much interested in the stranger, asked Henry if he had taken any degree, and a variety of questions. Amongst others, one of the mandarins said, so Henry translated to me, "Is it true that your Sovereign is a woman? how can you let a woman govern you?" Henry immediately turned the tables upon the mandarin by saying, "You have not only one woman, but two to govern you." They all burst out laughing, and much enjoyed the joke, as, of course, the Empress mother and the Dowager Empress rule China in the name of the little boy emperor, who is only five years of age. The empresses sit behind a curtain when the cabinet councils are held, and their opinions decide all questions. As the movement amongst the crowd became more evident, we rose and went into the quadrangle. The bachelors of arts placed themselves in the centre of the quadrangle opposite the inner gates of the yamun, which were now thrown open, and

the chancellor appeared. He was helped up and down the steps leading to the place where the table stood, by an attendant on each side of him, not on account of his age, as he is only forty-seven, but to give dignity to his appearance. At this moment some men carried a large box to the table, and, amidst the shouts of all assembled, scrolls bearing the names of the successful candidates were placed in it. The box was then carried off to the temple of Confucius. To our astonishment and disappointment, the chancellor now rose, and retired into his yamun, and the doors were closed behind him. We became so much crowded by the bachelors of arts, who wished to take as near a look as possible of us, and whose curiosity caused the atmosphere around us to become intolerably oppressive, that we again retired to our room for shelter. We waited some little time here, until the beating of drums announced that the chancellor was again on his way, and he soon appeared at the inner gates. This time he was dressed in full court costume, wearing a beautifully embroidered robe and full-dress hat. The robe was made of silk, the foundation colour of which was a deep claret, and rich embroidery was worked on it in gold thread and coloured silks. A small altar with an embroidered covering

hanging down in front was now brought near to the chancellor's table, and on it were placed the Emperor's tablet, and lighted joss-sticks. The chancellor advanced, knelt before the altar, and did the kau-tau thrice before the tablet. A master of ceremonies, as usual, directed the kneeling, kau-tau, etc. All the bachelors of arts, now arranged themselves in a half-circle near the altar, and, where it was possible, they did the kau-tau, but many of them were too pressed for room to kneel, and they only raised their hands in sign of worship when the kau-tau was performed by the others. The chancellor now disappeared once more behind the great doors, and remained invisible for another half hour or so. We went back to our shelter, and the open doorway was soon filled with a curious crowd bent upon staring at us.

You will agree with me that Chinese officials do not hurry over their work. When we heard the drums, we again went out conducted by our kind friendly mandarin, who took us each time to a first-rate position, quite close to the chancellor's table. When the chancellor appeared for a third time, we saw that he had taken off his grand court dress and hat, and was dressed in his usual plainer costume, which is a dark silk coat with a square of gold embroidery on the

shoulder and one on the chest. The latter is divided in half to allow of the coat being buttoned up in front. He had not, however, taken off his handsome chain of coral beads and jadestone. When he seated himself at the table, one of the attendants placed before him a large paper book, in which were recorded the names of the successful candidates according to the various divisions of the prefecture from which they had come. A man standing on a raised platform read aloud the names in succession. The candidates, who were grouped in front of the chancellor's table and down the centre of the quadrangle, called out "yau" (yes), in answer to their names. The chancellor is evidently an irritable man, for every now and then, with a scowl on his face, he interrupted the official who was calling out the names, and complained in a querulous voice that he could not hear him. He was waited upon in a most assiduous manner by an attendant, who turned over the pages of the book for him and showed him the place where the particular name called out was written down.

He sipped his tea and took snuff as he followed the names in the book. When the calling out of the names was over, small cups of wine were carried into the quadrangle on trays, and the chancellor and the candidates drank wine together.

After this the whole of the bachelors of arts prostrated themselves and did the kau-tau to the chancellor. Such a bright mass of colour they looked as they all knelt together.

The chancellor stood up as this was going on, and on its conclusion, he left and re-entered his yamun. The newly created bachelors of arts now distributed themselves about the quadrangle, looking most proud of themselves, and their relatives clustered round them in admiration. Many of them sat down at small tables on which were refreshments of a light kind, and they chattered together with beaming countenances. All eventually got into their gaily-decorated chairs and were carried through certain streets in procession; through the great south gate (or imperial gate) and then on through the street called Chong-uen-fong, or street of literary honours, although many of them had to retrace their steps to go to their homes. As you see, from the long description I have given you, the Chinese pay the greatest honour to those who obtain degrees, whether the candidates be from the higher or lower grades of society.

LETTER XXV.

CANTON, September 27th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

WE were invited last Wednesday to a dinner given by Mr. Howqua in honour of his second marriage, which had taken place three days before. We were requested to take some friends with us, and we therefore asked an American lady and her daughter, and two other friends who had accompanied us on a previous occasion, to join our party. When we arrived at our friend's house, we ladies were at once conducted to the new suite of rooms which had been prepared for the bride, and were received by her. She is a pretty girl, sixteen years of age, with small regular features. She was dressed in a beautifully embroidered silk costume, and carried in her hand a deep yellow silk handkerchief, which she told us she had embroidered herself. The pattern of flowers and butterflies on it was most charmingly shaded, in fact shaded as only these Easterns know how to shade colours. We were asked to seat ourselves; then the bride brought round wine to us, she holding the glasses, when

presenting them to us, in both hands. We asked Minnie to beg her to be seated, but we could not prevail upon her to take a chair, and we learnt that the reason was that the fifth wife of the late Howqua was in the room, and a younger wife cannot seat herself in the presence of one who is older, unless specially invited by her to do so. It is also the custom for a bride to stand in the presence of the bridegroom, unless he ask her to take a seat. This little bride has such a bright expression, I am tempted to say quite an European expression, and seemed so pleased with our admiration. She did not belong to the same rank of society as her husband. In fact she has been a slave, and was redeemed by her husband for the sum of three hundred dollars. As this is the case, and as she is not a small-footed woman, she cannot take the position of first wife, although she is really the only wife Mr. Howqua has at present. She had never seen an European before, but although she evidently felt shy in her new position, she behaved charmingly, with all the native grace of a Chinese lady. She and the young American lady, who were of the same age, became very friendly, and laughed and chatted together. We were now told that dinner was ready, and were taken into the dining hall.

We did not see the bride again until we returned to her room after dinner. Had she been a first wife she would have handed rice round to the guests at the close of the repast. Before we left her to go into the dining hall, she had taken off her beautifully embroidered dress and appeared in a plain dark one. The Chinese are pre-eminently an economical people. When we spoke of the beauty of the dress, it was brought in for us to see; it was folded up and had evidently been put away carefully. The dinner was essentially Chinese in all respects, with as many courses as on former occasions. The only thing worthy of note was, that a blind singing woman sang all dinner time to the accompaniment of two stringed instruments. I cannot get accustomed to Chinese vocal music, it must require a long education on the part of an European before he can appreciate it. But may not this be also the case with our music to a Chinese ear? Probably they can distinguish no melody in it. This blind songstress sang on and on, not pausing more than two or three times during the time we were at dinner. I certainly could not distinguish that she varied the note more than to three or four different keys, and the whole singing was in a high falsetto. It was, as usual, a history of some celebrated hero or heroine of

bygone ages which formed the subject of her song. When dinner was over, we all, Henry and the bridegroom included, went to the bride's apartments. They consist of two rooms, a sitting-room with some pretty cabinets in it, some European chairs, carpet, looking-glass, ornaments, and curtains of chintz and muslin which a friend of ours chose for Mr. Howqua at Hong Kong. I was amused at seeing several English crotchet chair-backs placed on the chairs. The room remains, nevertheless, essentially Chinese in its appearance, with its curious pieces of wood carving on the partition between the two rooms, and pictures of coloured glass let in as transparencies. European curtains took the place of a door between the two rooms. You go from the sitting-room into the bedroom. Here the European style does not prevail. The blind female singer now came into the bride's sitting-room with her guitar, and a blind man accompanied her, holding a stringed instrument.

With all their formalities, deference to rank, etc., the Chinese are a most republican people, as was illustrated by the blind man asking for a match, lighting his pipe, and indulging in a smoke before the performance began. We ladies retired into the inner room and had a chat with the bride by the aid of our two young

friends. One of our party had consented to be rouged by a Chinese lady, and I was most amused at watching the process, and seeing the amount of rouge she put on. The admiration was universal when our friend was released from the hands of her decorator, and each lady asked us if we did not think her beautiful, much more beautiful than before she was rouged. They wanted to use the same art on all our faces, but we politely declined, much to the regret of our hostesses. The bride, who was now again dressed in her beautiful costume, handed tea to us all, Henry included. After we had spent some time in these rooms, fruit being offered to us at intervals, we took leave of our kind friends. We were charmed with the gentle girlish bride, and she seemed to be equally attracted by her strange visitors. Before we left she promised to come at some future time and take an English dinner with us.

Our particular friend amongst the Mistresses Howqua (I find it difficult to represent her in her true title, as we have no equivalent in England to wives No. two, three, and four) took me by the hand, one of the elder ladies conducting our friends. We walked through the several rooms, halls, and quadrangles, which led from the sanctum sanc-

torum, where we had been entertained, to the outer reception hall, where our chairs were in readiness for us. It is difficult to convey to you the size of these family residences: it took us at least five minutes to pass from the bride's apartments to the entrance-hall. These houses must, with their gardens, occupy many acres of ground, and it strikes one at first as so strange to pass into them from the narrow crowded streets. The large halls of the houses are most charming for summer, as they are very cool, the sun's rays not being able to penetrate into them, but the want of ventilation in the smaller rooms makes them oppressive.

LETTER XXVI.

CANTON, October 2nd, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

ON Friday last, a friend very kindly invited us to make a long excursion up the country with him in a steam-launch, and we most gladly accepted his offer. The day was beautiful, but very hot, and we suffered a good deal from the sun. We started at seven A.M., and steamed at full speed during the twelve hours we were out, from seven A.M. to seven P.M., making a

distance of 120 miles. The steam-launch we were in belongs to the Chinese government, and is manned by Chinese sailors, who look well in their naval uniform. They wear jackets and wide trousers made in blue cotton, a wide crimson sash round their waists, and broad-brimmed straw hats at the back of their heads. The Chinese make very good sailors when commanded by Europeans. We passed Tchun-Tchun, celebrated for its salt fish, which is eaten in large quantities with rice by the Chinese. There are also vast rice stores here. We then steamed past Poon-Poo, a paper-making district. Some parts of the river are exceedingly pretty, and as this branch of it makes constant abrupt turns, you seem to be land-locked at times, and so have the beautiful effects of lake scenery. We were in sight of a fine range of hills all day. We passed close to extensive paddy fields, which looked fresh and brilliantly green, more so than our brightest meadows at home; then we went by large mulberry plantations which stretched to the banks of the river. In some of them, men and women were stripping the leaves off the trees. These countrymen looked picturesque with their naked brown legs and their immense straw hats, which culminate in a peak in the centre. We passed by Taai-Laong, the capital of the county Shun-Tuk,

and then reached Kum-Chuk, where are some rapids which we had to shoot. Two children who were with us were dreadfully alarmed, and the youngest said to his mother, our hostess, "Will the steamer be drowned?" He was constantly inquiring afterwards if we should come to any more rocks. We were now in the very heart of the silk district. We then went by Luk-Lau, and within a mile of the large town of Kow-Kong. The distance we had to travel in the day prevented us from landing at any point of interest, which was a great disappointment to me, as I much wished to go over some of the large nurseries for silk-worms. The people were very anxious for rain in this neighbourhood, as it was much needed for the mulberry plantations. Our circuitous route brought us back into that branch of the Pearl River which flows by Shameen by a different channel to the one we had taken in starting for our trip. We saw during the day very many picturesque-looking country boats of various kinds, but I admired none so much as those with sails shaped like butterfly wings. We had had a beautiful excursion, and seen a large tract of country; the sun's heat had been the single drawback. The awning, though double, did not shelter us as much as it would have done had we not made so many sharp turns. The sun was always pouring his ardent oblique rays upon us at

unexpected moments, and the heat quite upset me and made me unable to appreciate the scenery for some miles. I could not do more than take a look at some parts of the country through partially closed eyes, and I felt so ill that I longed to lie down. Canton looked very pretty as we came in sight of it. It was lighted up with thousands of lanterns, in honour of the goddess of the moon. We took a hasty dinner on our arrival at home, and then walked into one of the suburbs of the city, where we ascended a pawn-tower to enable us to have a good view of the illumination. But first I must give you a description of these towers, the names of which sound so curious to our ears. The one we visited is in the street called Shap-Ts'at-Poo, and its name is Uen-Ching. It is a very large building, consisting of a very high brick tower, made fire-proof. These pawn-shops are divided into three classes, and are kept by imperial sanction.

A licence is issued to those seeking to commence business as pawnbrokers for the term of sixty years ; at the end of that period it must be renewed, but by another person, not the one who originally took out the licence. A certain tax is paid by the men first commencing the business, and also by those who wish to continue it after the term of sixty years has expired. The pawnbrokers are

obliged to accept a loan from the provincial treasurer, for which they have to pay at the rate of twelve per cent. per annum. Should a firm of pawnbrokers fail, the other establishments of the same nature must refund to the government the loss it has sustained by the failure. There are one hundred first-class pawn-shops in Canton. People who deposit goods at these pawn-towers, must pay at the rate of thirty-six per cent. per annum; but this percentage can be lowered at the will of the pawnbroker on a large transaction. The government requires that they should lower their rate of percentage to all those who redeem their goods in the tenth month of the year, as by this means those who have pawned their winter's clothing, blankets, etc., can more easily redeem them when they are most needed.

It was most polite of the owners of the pawn-tower to allow us to enter it at nine o'clock at night, as they are most particular whom they admit, and naturally would fear any light being carried about the various storeys of which it consists. These towers are most strongly built, and strictly guarded. As we mounted the different stages, I saw shelves upon shelves divided into pigeon-holes, and each full of pawned articles, some of which were of a most costly nature. They are very different to our pawn-

shops, and Chinese gentlemen often deposit their furs and valuables to be taken care of in these towers. Do not be shocked when I tell you that my furs are at the present moment in this very pawn-tower. When at last we arrived on the flat roof, I saw large stones placed there, to throw on the heads of assailants, for sometimes these towers are attacked by bands of robbers. There were also earthenware vessels on the roof containing water to be used in case of incipient fire. The illumination of the city looked pretty from this elevated position, but you can imagine that it requires many thousands of lanterns to make any grand display of light in such an immense city as Canton. In some cases high poles were erected, on the tops of which were placed clusters of lanterns. On each of these lanterns was inscribed, "King-po-chung-tsui," which means "Joyfully congratulate the mid autumn." In other cases lanterns suspended from the tops of poles illuminated the roofs of the houses. This feast is held on the 15th day of the 8th moon of the Chinese year, and is called Chung-tsui. We had intended, when we started from home, to return by the steamboat wharves on the banks of the river; but as this route was longer, and as we were extremely tired, we gave up our plan and went home by the way we had taken in going to the

pawn-tower. And fortunate it was we did so, as at that very time a large body of Chinese attacked one of the river steamers which was lying alongside the wharf, probably thinking that she had treasure on board. The captain had to send for aid from a gun-boat before the mob could be driven back and dispersed. Had we returned home by the river, we should have been in the midst of the tumult, and probably should have been attacked and injured by the excited mob. There are many strangers in the city who have come from Hong Kong and other places to see the illuminations, and they are a lawless, riotous set of men. We heard, on our return home, that, in a quarrel on board one of the flower boats that evening, a man had been killed.

A curious festival has also been held this week in honour of the Seven Sisters (goddesses), who are supposed by the Chinese to occupy a group of seven stars. It is said that one of these sisters made a clandestine marriage with a cow-herd occupying a planet on the other side of the Milky Way; and once a year the wife is permitted by her sisters, who were greatly incensed at her marriage, to cross the Milky Way to meet her husband. Women especially worship these seven sisters, and all influential families, who are not in

mourning (at the time of mourning it is strictly forbidden for a family to take part in this or any other festival), make grand preparations for the observance of this ceremony. We were fortunately invited by a Chinese gentleman named Wong, one of the Shun-Kum, or leading gentry of the city, to inspect the offerings presented to these goddesses at his residence. We were carried in our chairs into the reception-hall of Mr. Wong's house at seven P.M., on Monday night, and, when the inner doors were opened, a blaze of light burst upon our view. In the centre of the large inner hall a very long wide table stood, which was covered with offerings of various kinds. Fruits in great variety were arranged on innumerable small plates, which were placed at intervals down the centre and sides of the table. Between them we saw a large display of embroidered clothes for the goddesses, all made in miniature. These had been worked by the ladies of the family for the occasion. I was much amused as I walked up and down the sides of the table, and inspected the work. It consisted of beautifully embroidered shoes, very tiny, evidently implying that the goddesses have compressed feet; numbers of very small embroidered bags to hold scent; embroidered head-dresses beautifully worked, tiny silk umbrellas, silk tunics and trousers

fully embroidered, standards, insignia of rank, etc., etc., all in miniature. In the centre of the table stood models of Chinese houses, European houses containing minute inhabitants, a model of a ship, a model of the bridge over which the married goddess is supposed to cross the Milky Way on this night of the festival, baskets of artificial flowers made of the thinnest paper of various colours, or of grains of unboiled rice and seeds. Arrangements of real flowers were also on the table; these, as is always the case with flowers put together by the Chinese, were picked off close to the stalks, and pressed together in plates, no green leaves being mixed with them. Overhead hung many chandeliers festooned with real or artificial flowers. At this festival, poor as well as rich friends of the family are allowed to come in and gaze upon the grand sight, and a crowd of people was moving round the heavily laden table when we entered, but at our host's request they immediately made way for us to pass. After we had made our tour of inspection, Minnie and I were conducted by Mr. Wong to the ladies' apartments, to be introduced to his mother, a lady eighty-six years of age. She was most gracious, and asked me many questions. Before taking leave of her, she requested me to be her god-child. As I had previously learned

that nothing more was meant by this proposal than a kind of kinship, I expressed my readiness, through Minnie, to accept the honour, and then the old lady and I bowed and chin-chinned each other.

Some weeks ago, when I was on a visit to another Chinese family, I was startled by one of the young ladies asking me to be her god-mother, and not understanding then what was meant by the term, I said that could not be unless she became a Christian. "Yes, I will become a Christian," was the ready answer, the young lady not knowing in the least what was meant by the term Christian.

After visiting the old lady, I went into another of the suites of rooms, and was introduced to my host's wife and some other ladies. The small-footed wife was eating her dinner when I entered the room, and she did not allow my visit to interfere with her occupation, for as she talked to me she helped herself to the contents of the various little basins in the centre of the table. Fruit was handed to me by the slaves belonging to the lady. On leaving this fine Chinese residence, we went into a neighbouring house, and here we saw similar arrangements of offerings placed upon a long table in the principal hall, but it was all on a smaller scale. Had I not been too tired to wait until midnight,

I should have been able to see the single ladies of this family draw water from a well, which they do yearly, on this the seventh night of the eighth month of the Chinese year. This custom is observed in all Chinese families. The water when drawn is placed in earthenware vessels, and hermetically sealed. In case of fever attacking the family, this water, which is looked upon as a febrifuge, is given to the invalid, and is supposed to be able to work his cure. The observance of this festival includes burning paper offerings of various kinds, amongst them a paper representation of the canopy of heaven. These seven sisters, in whose honour the festival is held, are supposed to grant skill in needlework, and to shield their worshippers from diseases. We were invited to return to Mr. Wong's house the following day, to take luncheon with him and to go over his large house and numerous gardens. When we arrived and entered the inner hall, we again saw the long table with its display of fruits, embroidery, etc., and a crowd of visitors was engaged in inspecting the treasures. Walking up this long hall, we chin-chinned a group of ladies belonging to the family, who were standing at the door of one of the apartments. We were conducted to the *atrium*, which is fitted up in the invariable style of Chinese sitting-rooms. A row of black wood chairs with marble

seats and backs was placed down each side of it, and between the chairs teapoys (small tables) were arranged. We found a party of fifteen Chinese gentlemen assembled in this room, many of whom had previously called upon us. They all chin-chinned us. This silent salutation is performed, as I daresay you know, by bending the body forward, placing the clenched fists together, and raising them up and down two or three times. A child, in chin-chinning his parents or aged persons, bends nearly and sometimes quite to the ground. Tea was now brought in, and the waiting-boys placed cups of it for us on the little tables which stood between our chairs. The host then said, "Yam-Cha" ("Drink tea"), and a general bowing to each other and raising of tea cups took place.

Scarcely, however, had we time to sip our tea before the gentlemen rose and asked us to go into the garden. A want of rest is a peculiarly marked feature in the Chinese character, especially so amongst men. Mr. Wong and his friends did not sit still for more than five minutes on the same chairs during our visit. They constantly changed their positions. Mr. Wong walked in and out of the room, took a whiff of a pipe in an anteroom, sat down for a minute or two, then rose and walked to the other end of the *atrium*. The move-

ments of these gentlemen reminded me of bees going in and out of their hives, only in the case of the former, no particular object was gained by the constant buzzing about. Do you realise from what I have said that there are no doors to open and shut on entering or leaving Chinese rooms? You walk into them through open carved entrances from square gardens or *impluviums*, which divide one large reception-room from another. The arrangements of the rooms remind one of those of a Pompeian house. Indeed a very good idea of the interior of a Chinese gentleman's residence may be obtained from the Pompeian Court in the Crystal Palace. We found the gardens well worth seeing. A very large piece of ornamental water stands in the centre of the largest garden, with a stone bridge crossing it. A handsome carved stone palisade surrounds it, upon which innumerable green glazed pots, containing chrysanthema, were placed. They are now only in an early stage of growth, but in two months' time they will be in full flower, and present a grand show. Mr. Wong has kindly asked us to go and see them when in bloom. One of the four garden houses is built on a high artificial mound and the path leading to it is paved with pebbles arranged in various devices. The small gardens pleased me much: you come upon them

unexpectedly between the suites of rooms. These gardens were full of flower-pots containing the beautiful lotus, cockscombs in the most brilliant shades of red, and ferns in endless variety. The same feature I noticed in these gardens as in others I have visited. If a piece of ornamental wood or stone-work had been injured or broken down, it had not been repaired; there was the gap, giving a dilapidated look to the whole. Rubbish too, broken crockery and other untidinesses, I saw put away in corners.

The Chinese do not understand the art of keeping their houses or gardens neat, and the first exclamation they make on going over the Chaplaincy is, that it is so clean and neat in every corner. We returned to the *atrium* through a long covered way made of stone, and were asked to seat ourselves. Immediately upon our doing so, tea was brought to us. Luncheon was then placed on a small round table standing in the centre of the room; and numerous small basins were arranged in a cluster in the middle of it. As usual, no tablecloth was used. When we were seated round the table, we were invited to help ourselves to the tiny pork puddings, little flat dumplings containing minced meat, dough dumplings stained red, sweet cakes, pine-apple preserve, and other fruits which graced the table.

The gentlemen constantly placed various kinds of food on my tiny plate, and I was obliged to do my best with chopsticks, being without fork or spoon. The luncheon was eaten most rapidly, and this is the case with all Chinese meals. Before it was over, two blind singing women, beautifully dressed in blue embroidered silk tunics edged with black, were led in by their amahs, or more properly speaking their foster-mothers. They seated themselves at a distant corner of the room, and were given refreshments. When they were ready to begin their performance, I left the luncheon-table, and took a seat immediately opposite them. Young women desirous to become singers often deprive themselves of sight, or, as our compradore said in speaking of them, "He makee he own eye blin," in order to be eligible for the vocation. One method of taking away the sight, to which they or their parents resort, is to put vaccine matter into the eyes. The two singers first took long pointed shields, made of quills, out of the pockets of their tunics, and drew them on over the long nails of the thumbs and forefingers of their left hands, so as to enable them to produce a sharp twanging sound from their instruments. They then tuned their guitars, which were singular and antiquated-looking instruments differing in shape, but both covered by snakes' skins. They now began

to play a most curious accompaniment, and one of them broke out into a high falsetto. After a time, a long interlude was played by both guitars, the amahs or foster-mothers fanning the performers the whole time, and keeping up a conversation with them between the songs. When the first singer had sung in a shrill falsetto for an hour, with scarcely any change of note perceptible to my uninitiated ear, the two young women exchanged instruments, and the second singer began her high-pitched song, and continued it until we rose to take our leave.

LETTER XXVII.

CANTON, October 16th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Two or three nights after we had taken the excursion up the river, about which I wrote to you on the 2nd inst., we went into the western suburb of the city, and passed through the street called Shap-Ts'at-Poo to see some wonderful illuminations given in honour of Wā-Kwong, the god of fire. It is most difficult for me to describe these illuminations to any one who has seen nothing of the kind, but I will endeavour to give you some idea of them. Various streets are illuminated the same night, the shop-keepers

who live in them agreeing to hire all the chandeliers, hangings, etc., for that purpose. On each of the nights of the month's festival some part of the city is decorated and illuminated. As I have already mentioned, the streets are narrow, and the houses seem nearly to touch one another at the top. On the nights of this festival heavy chandeliers hang down from the centre of beams placed across the streets; they contain many lights, and are placed at frequent intervals. These chandeliers struck me much at first, as they are so European in appearance, much like our old-fashioned heavy-cut drawing-room chandeliers to hold candles. They are made in all sizes and patterns, and some of them are most pretentious in appearance. Between these chandeliers, bright frames containing innumerable figures, dressed like life, representing scenes in past Chinese history, are suspended from beams across the streets just above one's head. The puppets are beautifully dressed in silk-embroidered robes, and no pains are spared on them or on any of the decorations. Some of the little figures in the frames move their heads, hands, arms, or legs. These frames are very often double, and so are filled with little puppets at the front and back. They are endless in number and are placed at lengths, perhaps two or

three yards, from each other. Deep silk fringe, made in bright variegated colours, hangs round these picture frames, and above them and at the side of them are long silken ornaments like tassels. I think we must have seen more than two hundred of these large frames slung across the long street we walked down. Some of the people in the mob were very rough, more so than I had previously experienced, and we heard that a great number of pickpockets were about us. They tried to molest us; and I became very anxious to leave the crowd and go down a quiet side street, but Henry said we must show no fear, and so we went on some way farther. A villainous-looking man constantly came near me, his unshaven head and general appearance showing that he had recently come out of prison. He walked close to me on my left side, with his arms interlaced, and his hand ready to grasp at my earrings. I called to Henry who was in front to look after this man, and he turned round and faced him. He saw at once that he was a dangerous character. The mob continued to press very closely upon us, and it struck me that some of them tried to trip me up, and I can assure you that it was not a pleasant experience. We turned now, fearing to go on any farther as there was great danger of a rush and a fray, but we found it difficult to make

our way in this lawless crowd. My evil-looking companion turned with us and kept close to my elbow, and even Henry now began to think there was cause for alarm. I wore a wide piece of black lace on my shoulders, and Henry considered the thief supposed that I had some jewellery under it; but most fortunately I had left all my personal ornaments, excepting my earrings, at home. Henry continued to turn round and face my tormentor and one or two bad-looking fellows who were with him, until we came to a cross street. Here some of the city guard were standing, and Henry went up to one of them, and said in a loud voice, "You see, that bad man is following and annoying us." This had the desired effect—our villainous friend and his associates immediately turned upon their heels and ran off. I was most thankful when we were once more in a quiet street. I had been so nervous about our little friend Minnie who was with us, as I was afraid she might be hurt in the fearful pressure of the crowd. We now walked home without further adventure.

Hearing a day or two after this that the illumination was to be held on a still grander scale in the street called Shwang-Mun-Li, we resolved to go and see it, notwithstanding the difficulties we had met with the other night. But this time we agreed not to take Minnie with us, as she attracted

so much attention. The streets by which we approached that portion of the city especially illuminated were very bright and pretty ; strips of gay coloured stuffs, festooned and gathered into the centre by a rosette, hung at intervals between the shops. These stuffs were of the prettiest shades possible, in yellow, pale blue, and red. A few chandeliers hung here at long intervals. But when we reached the fully-illuminated street, a very gay scene presented itself to our view. It was most profusely decorated with the framed effigies, bright tassels, and other silken ornaments. The chandeliers were innumerable, most various in shape and size, some containing as many as eighteen large glass globes. In the widest part of the street, a bamboo-house had been erected ; it was very high, and the inside of the roof was ornamented with brightly-painted boards. On a stage built at some little height from the ground, large incense burners and high candlesticks were arranged, also plants and shrubs trained into shapes of animals, boats, and fans. Some framed pictures also hung here, worked in kingfisher's feathers. Musicians sat on this stage. The crowd was very great, but it was composed of a much better class than on the previous occasion, and there were many mandarins present. Yesterday we again went into the city, as we

heard that the fine street in which the bankers live (called by foreigners, in consequence, Lombard street), named Ta-T'uung-Kai, was to be grandly illuminated in Wā-Kwong's honour. No expense had been spared, and the whole effect of this illumination was finer than either of those we had seen before. Rafters had been placed over the street, and white drill was stretched upon them so as to afford a protection in case of rain. From these rafters very large chandeliers were hung in the centre of the street. Many of them were very handsome, and some were highly decorated with silk ornaments and long tassels. Along each side of the street hung oil lamps made of a single globe only. These chandeliers and glass globes were within a few feet of each other; and in one part of the very long street they, and bright parti-coloured stuff hangings, formed the only decorations. The effect of the gay, wide hangings as they were carried across the street, looped high in the centre with thick-clustered rosettes, and hanging down on each side, was very charming. The colours were so beautifully blended together and formed pretty contrasts. A delicate grey mixed with a pale pink, a deep yellow with blue, a very dark red with a pale pink, and so on in endless variety. At another part of the street there were some curious

representations which were made in paper or silk; some imitated a couple of citrons in two colours, others storks, others were floral decorations. There were also many ornaments made in real flowers, which were pressed as close together as possible, and formed a mass of colour. Some of the latter ornamented the ends of the chandeliers. Other lamps bore figures decorated with kingfisher's feather. Then, as we walked on, we came to a great number of the framed pictures, with the curious effigies in them—each representing some scene. In one there was a boat which rocked up and down, some figures were sitting in it, and others were standing in various attitudes. Some of these frames contained about fifty of these figures, which were at least twelve inches high. I was amused at a scene represented very well in one of them. A princess was consulting a fortune-teller; she was sitting surrounded by her attendants, and the group altogether was well arranged. Many of these pictorial representations had a reference to the history of Wā-Kwong or his times. The crowd was very great, and again of the rougher sort, and we congratulated ourselves that we had gone into the city so early. It was half-past five o'clock, P.M., when we arrived at the illuminated streets, and the men had just begun to light the lamps, as the sun was

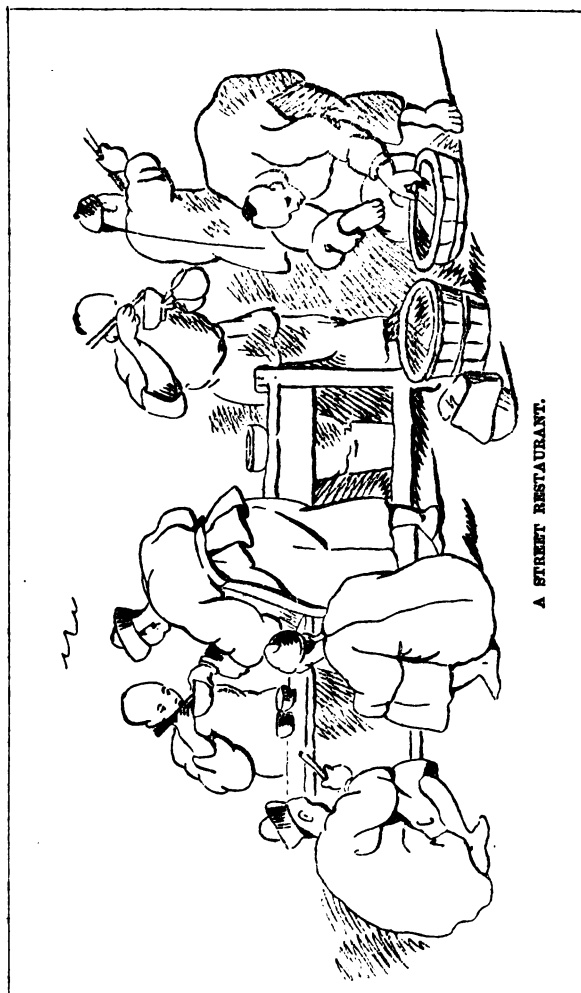
setting. We left shortly after seven o'clock, and so escaped the danger of again being surrounded by pickpockets and men of bad character.

LETTER XXVIII.

CANTON, October 21st, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER, ...

ON Thursday last, Henry and I made a most lovely excursion to the White Cloud Mountains. I had looked forward much to this trip, and the morning of Thursday was so beautiful that we felt we could not stay at home. We ordered mountain chairs, and at eleven o'clock we started. These chairs are very light, and as we had four coolies each, we went at a very good pace. We passed quickly through the city, and on reaching the I-ling-Miu, which is in the northern suburb, our chair-coolies stopped at a street restaurant to regale themselves before going into the open country. Henry and I got out of our chairs and sat under a wide-spreading banyan tree. We were much amused by watching many wayfarers, who were passing from or into the city, refreshing themselves at the street restaurant, either with tea and cakes, or boiled rice and fried fish, or with soups, fruits, etc.



A STREET RESTAURANT.

After a rest of a quarter of an hour, our coolies having invigorated themselves, we went on our way. The next halt we made was at a large Mohammedan mosque, called Ts'ing-Chan-Tsze, in which is a bell-shaped mausoleum, held to be very sacred, as it is supposed to contain the remains of the maternal uncle of Mahomet. Again resuming our journey, we passed along narrow pathways skirting rice fields and cucumber gardens. At length we reached the base of the mountain, and after a short pause began the ascent.

The journey from Shameen to the highest monastery took us just three hours. It was a lovely day, with a fresh invigorating wind, just such a day as we often have at Brighton in October, and it was especially enjoyed by us who had lately passed through such a trying hot season. One seemed to breathe again. As we wound our way up the mountain, we much enjoyed the fine extensive view of the city and its environs, which lay spread out like a map at our feet. The plain of Canton is very large, and is most abundantly watered by the many tributaries of its great river. The whole scene is striking.

The pagodas standing up in sharp relief give such a truly Chinese character to the scenery, which effect much increases as you ascend the mountain and perceive that it and the surrounding

hills are one vast place of burial. The tombs are built on the sides of the hills, and those we saw varied very much in size, colour, and material. The size is determined by the rank of the man buried in the tomb. Should he have been a great man, the tomb is immense, and very high poles, bearing the insignia of his rank, stand on each side of the approach to the grave. In one case I noticed a very grand arrangement leading to a vast tomb. There were many carved stone figures of attendants and of animals life-size. I think there were about six of these figures on each side of the approach to the tomb, and stone pillars surmounted by little stone lions were placed immediately close to it. I saw pale red, dark slate colour, and white sepulchres. Some of the hills are literally covered with them, from the summit to the base, while others are comparatively free from them, or have two or three only dotted about them. Geomancers have most likely pronounced the latter to be unlucky sites for burial. As a tomb is never disturbed after it is once made (unless one of the sons or grandsons of the deceased be convicted of high treason, in which case the bones of the latter are exhumed and scattered to the winds), and as one man only is often buried in these large receptacles for the dead, you can imagine how many thousands of tombs have accumulated in this vast burial ground.

Whatever be their size, or the material of which they are made, they are always in the Omega or horse-shoe form.* No one has been able to explain satisfactorily the reason why Chinese tombs are constructed in this shape. It has been conjectured that the Omega, the concluding letter of the Greek alphabet and which signifies the end, may have been known to the Chinese. The Omega was added, as is well known (with five other letters) to the Greek alphabet, by Cadmus. Whence he got the letter is a matter of uncertainty; but this much is known, that he brought it from the East, and Egypt has been named as the country in which he found it. Some persons contend that there was an intercourse between ancient Egypt and China; if so, it is probable that the Egyptians may have borrowed the Omega from the Chinese. In further support of the argument that the ancient Egyptians and the Chinese were at one period of their history in communication with each other, is the fact that both nations marked the hours of the day by clepsydras, or water clocks.

The monasteries (and there are thirteen of them on these White Cloud Mountains) are most beautifully situated. I feel how delightful it would be to spend a week in one of them during the heat

* Vide illustration of Chinese tomb in Letter III.

of summer. The pathway leading to the summit is very narrow, and only one chair can go along at a time. At the steep parts of the ascent, stone steps have been made. A Chinese lady gave the money for this work, as an act of reparation;* her husband, a banker, having embezzled large sums of money intrusted to his care. These steps are extremely steep, and it is hard work for coolies to carry their living burdens up them. We rested for a couple of hours when we arrived at the highest monastery, and the keen bright air had made us hungry and so gave a relish to the simple luncheon we had taken with us. There are rooms in this monastery set apart for the use of strangers, and one of the monks attends to the comforts of those who, like ourselves, spend a few hours, and picnic here. The monastery is charmingly situated, and its quaint double Chinese roof looks so picturesque through the trees, as you approach. Having finished our luncheon, we walked down the hill a short distance to another monastery, which is, I think, even more beautifully situated than the one in which we rested. This monastery is called

* Building bridges, making roads, paving pathways with granite, placing steps on steep ascents, erecting resting-places on the high roads for wayfarers, providing the poor with cold tea in summer, and with ginger-soup in winter, are regarded by the Chinese as meritorious acts, and well-pleasing to the gods.

Chaang-Ohn-Ki, and is named after the hero in whose honour it was built. When he was on earth, he was a high minister of state and lived about 246 B.C. He was sent to the White Cloud Mountains by the Emperor then reigning, in search of the herb or grass which was supposed to impart immortality to man. Chaang-Ohn-Ki, it is said, found this elixir of life growing in abundance on the mountain side, and at once partook of it. On his doing so, the precious plant disappeared from the mountain side—none of it remained for his royal master. His despair was great, and with the view of hiding himself from his master's wrath, he assumed the garb of a hermit, and resolved to spend the remainder of his life amidst the solitudes of this mountain. Becoming weary of life, he attempted suicide by throwing himself from the top of the rock on which the temple now stands into the plains beneath. A stork, however, is said to have caught him in the air and conveyed him to Elysium. Thousands of people resort to this monastery on the twenty-seventh day of the seventh moon, to ask this god to give them the blessings of health and long life.

Henry, having on a previous occasion slept at this monastery, is well known to the three or four Buddhist monks who reside there. They all welcomed him most cordially, and entered into an

animated conversation with him. Whilst they were talking together, I was amusing myself by watching another monk who was in the act of having his head shaved by an itinerant barber.



AN ITINERANT BARBER.

These itinerant barbers are quite an institution in China, going, as they do, from village to village and from monastery to monastery, in pursuit of their calling. They look so picturesque, as one

meets them about the country, wearing, as they do, broad-brimmed straw hats, loose jackets, and long flowing trousers. These men carry a miniature chest of drawers, in which they keep their razors, brushes, combs, and earnings, suspended



AN ITINERANT BARBER WAITING FOR A CUSTOMER.

from one end of a thin bamboo pole which rests on their shoulders. From the other end a wooden washstand and basin are suspended. I have not mentioned soap, as none is used in Chinese shaving. The tiny chest of drawers serves as a seat for the customers.

I was delighted with the lovely ferns I found on the way up the mountain, and in my stroll on the summit. What a fine collection of ferns might be made on this mountain. We returned home by a different route, and found to our disappointment that, in consequence of the late hour (it was past seven o'clock, P.M.), the east gate, by which we had hoped to enter the city, and so make a short cut, was not only closed, but that the key had been conveyed to the Tartar General. Nothing remained for us but to make a *détour*, dark as it had now become, so as to go through the northern and western suburbs. We were taken by the path under the east wall; our coolies eventually lost their way, and we found ourselves amongst some knolls, which proved to be graves. I was nearly upset in my chair, and had to get out, tired as I was, and to climb up a hill. Most fortunately the moon shone clearly from the clouds at this moment and so enabled us to find our way, and, after a scramble and a walk along a very narrow path at the top of a hill, we reached the approach to the suburb. I again had the pleasure of going through the streets when lighted up with the picturesque lanterns, and noticed many things I had not seen before. On reaching the Chaplaincy we made a hasty supper, and were glad to go to bed immediately after we had risen from the table.

LETTER XXIX.

CANTON, October 22nd, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

WE went last Tuesday to the Chinese parade ground, as we heard that a military review was to take place. There are two parade grounds, one on which Chinese troops are drilled, and the Tartar ground, on which Tartar troops go through their exercises. It was the second day of the review when we went to the ground, and the infantry were under inspection. A military mandarin was seated as usual behind a table covered with a scarlet cloth, placed in a raised building at the end of the field. A red-coloured ensign was held by the side of the table. To the left, on a platform made of brick, the Imperial yellow standard was raised, and men directed the military movements from this elevated position by beating drums. It is most difficult for me to convey to you any correct idea of the curious performances we saw. They resembled so exactly what one sees on the stage of a theatre at home, that it was only by a strong effort I could in the least realise that it was real life I was witnessing, and not scenes

of a play passing before me. When we arrived on the ground at seven A.M., we saw three or four curious-looking erections, and we could not at first sight imagine what they were, but on going close to them we discovered that they were shields piled up high into a pointed form to represent fortifications. When we went to the back of them, we saw that men were holding them in their positions. The men holding the first row of shields knelt, those holding the second row were partly bent, and the men upholding the third row stood erect. A man in addition held a shield in his upraised arms, which formed the pinnacle of the design. Behind these sets of shields stood soldiers, who were not at the moment taking an active part in the proceedings. At a given signal, they advanced from behind the piled shields, generally in twos and twos, arriving in front of the supposed fortification. But they did not walk forward; the simple truth is, they arrived with a hop, skip, and a jump, just as an European acrobat comes on to the stage at a performance given in a hippodrome. At one moment these combatants were armed with short swords or spears, at another moment with bludgeons, or with double swords. Often the two who engaged each other used different weapons; the one holding a long sword, the other a

curious-looking bamboo weapon having sharp iron points. At other times the two warriors carried shields, which always have some hideous face drawn on them in colour, like those you have seen in our collection at the Crystal Palace. Then one would drop his shield, and have to defend himself against his opponent who retained his shield. The one bearing the shield would then fall, roll over on the ground, and regain his proper position before his opponent could strike. It was most ludicrous to see these curious-looking men roll over and over, and we could not help laughing heartily at the sight. The combatants fought as much with their feet as with their hands; they kicked each other, put their feet into the first position, and performed all manner of antics with them, reminding us again and again of English acrobats. Their costume too, or uniform as I should perhaps call it, was most startling to our eyes. The men who were engaged when we were on the ground were Tartars, for both Chinese and Tartars were reviewed that day. The Tartar troops serve under eight different banners, and are allowed certain immunities. Each company of these soldiers wore uniforms made in the colour of the especial banner under which it was enrolled. The short loose sleeveless jacket in one company was red, in another yellow, faced

with brown; in a third dark blue, in a fourth white, and so on in accordance with each particular banner. The tunics were white, the stockings coloured, according to the colour of the loose jacket. The boots were high, made of black cloth. A large banner was carried before each division. As we were looking on, we were startled by seeing one of the soldiers appear on the top of the sham fortification, jump down, and run forward to engage an enemy. When this kind of two-handed, or four-handed, fighting was over, the men advanced and took their shields from the pyramidal heap, and then we discovered that a ladder had been placed at the back of them upon which our acrobatic performer had stood when he appeared to be resting on the piled shields. A general kind of engagement finished this part of the review, and the troops then marched off to the farther end of the field. They did not march in step, nor in any kind of order. The larger banners were carried in the hand, but the smaller flags were placed in flag-holders, which were strapped on to the soldiers' backs. The effect is curious when you see the soldiers coming towards you with the flags rising from their shoulders over their heads. When we followed to the end of the field, we saw the men pile their shields; this they did by walking round a centre, each man

depositing his shield as he passed a certain spot. Some more sham fighting went on: then the archers stood in a semicircle, and the swordsmen, placed in two long lines, went through their sword-exercises. They swung their swords to the right, then brought them to the left, making a curious loud shouting noise as they did so. Then they pointed their swords in all directions. While they were doing this they rested on one knee, and kept their shields on the left arm.

As we learnt that there was to be a pause of two hours before the artillery practice began, we left the parade ground, and returned home in our chairs. We had found them useful on the ground, and rested in them when nothing important was going on. Two tall Tartars, with long-thonged whips in their hands, had kept the crowd from pressing upon us during the review, but before we left the ground the people began to be very troublesome to us, and we were glad to escape from their too-pronounced curiosity. We went again to the same parade ground last Thursday at six A.M., as we were told that a review was to be held on a still grander scale on that day. On arriving at the ground we found that the report was true. In the elevated building at the end of the field, twenty mandarins were seated; nineteen of them wore blue buttons, but the chief man's

hat was decorated with the much coveted red button. The crowd was considerably greater, and the ground altogether had a much more military aspect than on the previous occasion. As we came upon the ground, the infantry, over 1000 strong, were drawn up at the further end of the field, and the cavalry in front of them, waiting until the time came for them to be reviewed. In the centre of the field a sunken bridle-path stretched across, and it was here that the exercises were taking place. On each side of the path, at intervals, red poles with circular tops were placed for gun practice, and low targets, about two feet high, stood on the ground for bow and arrow practice. Three men stood a little way in front of the building in which the mandarins were sitting, holding different coloured ensigns in their hands, and behind them the royal standard was displayed. The big drum now sounded from the high brick building to the left of us, and as one of the three standard-bearers dipped a dark blue flag, a rider galloped from one side of the field to the other along the sunken bridle-path. Many horsemen now passed in quick succession. Sometimes it was a mounted archer, who discharged his arrows at the small targets at full speed; sometimes it was a mounted dragoon, armed with a Chinese carbine, with which he took aim at the higher targets as

he rushed by. But the most strange and interesting sight was a man, dressed in the parti-coloured uniform of one of the banners, who performed feats on horseback precisely as European actors amuse an audience at a hippodrome. The drum sounded, the flag was dipped, and then appeared one of the curious lean Chinese ponies at full gallop, with what looked most unlike a living burden on its back. Sometimes a leg raised in the air was all you could make out of the rider's outline, he being on his head, one leg hanging down on one side, the other raised as high as possible in the air. At another time a pony rushed by with a rider lying along the side of its body, not supported by a saddle, as there was none; the man's head by the pony's neck, his legs stretched out behind him. Then another pony dashed past, apparently without a rider, as the soldier riding him was lying along the animal on the farther side. When the pony arrived in the centre of the course, the man jumped up and stood upon the animal's back. We also saw a rider stand on the pony he was riding, then kneel, clap his hands, twist himself suddenly and ride on the animal's neck with his face turned to its tail. This military exercise is, Henry tells me, an exact imitation of the Cossack training, and therefore shows great affinity between the

two nations. After these evolutions, the targets were cleared away, a movement took place among the troops at the end of the field, and then the shooting commenced. Some men now advanced bearing long poles, which they placed in the ground, and then stretched printed drill over them. We discovered that this erection was a representation of a city wall, and that there were gates in it which opened and closed. The walls were imitated by a dark grey, with white lines painted on it so as to represent stones. The gates were a brilliant scarlet, studded with brass nails. Men, having conch shells in their hands, now took up their position immediately in front of where we were standing, which was close to the raised platform on which the mandarins were seated. These men with the conch shells, about twenty in number, were dressed in the oldest and the dirtiest of costumes. They blew their shells, making a most dismal sound, the musical instruments and drums were beaten from the elevation, the scarlet gates were thrown open, and through them issued the infantry bearing banners and gingals. These large guns require two men to carry them, one supporting the muzzle end on his shoulder, the other the butt end on his shoulder. The troops advanced, formed a circle, and then fell into lines, each line

being headed by a different coloured banner. The men were arranged according to their especial standards, and the effect was very good when the bright jackets were grouped into colours. The subaltern officers stood a little way in front of each line, holding small flags in their hands, which they dipped as a signal to commence firing, and then kneeling, they continued to wave them to and fro on the ground according to the direction in which the firing was to continue. A large drum placed a short way in front of the mock city gates gave the signal to cease firing. The men when they prepared to fire the gingals placed themselves in a most curious position. They advanced the right leg considerably in front of the left, then the one at the muzzle, the other at the butt end, bent their bodies with the view of taking aim. When the firing had ceased, the troops marched in line through the scarlet gates to the sound of the dismal groans (which were most uncertain in their sound) of the conch shells. The drums on the elevation were again beaten most vigorously, and the review was over. The Tartar troops are a fine broad-shouldered body of men, with open countenances, very intelligent-looking, and altogether more prepossessing in appearance than the Chinese inhabitants of the city.

LETTER XXX.

CANTON, October 29th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

WE made up our minds last week to go to the early fair which is held in the city every day from six to eight A.M. in the street called In-T'sze-Li. The fair is well worth seeing, and generally contains an endless variety of goods, such as china, glass, dresses of all kinds, second-hand shoes, a very large amount of valuable jadestone ornaments, diamonds, and other jewellery. The jewellery and jadestone ornaments are displayed in open halls, each dealer having a little counter before him. The goods, such as china vases, glass, old iron, ornaments of every variety, etc., are arranged on the ground in front of the shops forming the street. I was amused by seeing men walking about displaying beautifully embroidered second-hand robes on their backs or spread over their arms, they having no stalls on which to arrange their goods. All has to be cleared away before eight A.M. Many of the valuables come from the pawn-shops, and are sold as unredeemed pledges, but Henry says a great deal that is exhibited is stolen property. The thieves carry

their possessions very early on the following morning after stealing them, to the fair, and so dispose of them before any one is on their track. We did not dare to make any offer for the jade-stone ornaments which we admired, for it requires a practised eye to discriminate the value of the jadestone. There is a great variety of worth in it, thus one bangle may be worth eight dollars, another two thousand dollars, and to our uninitiated eyes they look much the same, in fact we might buy the inferior quality in ignorance. Having made some small purchases, an embroidered Pekinese lady's jacket amongst them, we re-seated ourselves in our chairs and went on for some distance beyond the north gate of the city to witness cricket-fighting, a favourite pastime of the Chinese. As we approached the field where it took place, we saw crowds of men standing about some sheds erected on the spot. Most of the company were of the lowest order, but there were some respectable men, including Tartar officers and mandarins. Much money is lost in this form of gambling. On entering the largest shed, we saw a raised platform on which some men sat behind a counter, who were employed in weighing the crickets, in weighing the dollars, in recording the bets, in receiving the money laid by both sides on each match, and in paying the

winner of each particular fight, after deducting a percentage for the expenses of the building. In this shed numbers of men were collected, each holding in his hand a little round earthenware basin covered with a cloth. These basins contained the fighting-crickets. The matches are played for large as well as small sums of money, and many hundred dollars changed hands during the short time we were present. We entered one of the smaller mat sheds, consisting of two or three rooms, and stood by a round table, and although the people assembled there belonged to the lowest orders, they were most polite to us. Two men had come in from the large tent, each having a little earthenware bowl in his hand, and after they had uncovered them, and examined the two occupants to certify they were their identical crickets, the chirping combatants were put into an earthenware bowl on the table, and the fight began. The two men held small feather pencils in their hands by which they stirred up and enraged the belligerents, which fight generally with great spirit, and often lose legs and wings in the contest. The two crickets walk round and round the bowl at first, then rush at each other with such violence that they are often thrown on their backs. Should the one cricket run away from his opponent three times in succession, he is pronounced by the

umpire present, to be defeated. Those standing round the table make bets upon the one or other of the fighting-cricket. The successful crickets are taken home, and when they die (they live but a hundred days, or with care a hundred and thirty



CRICKET-FIGHTING.

days) are placed in tiny silver coffins, and are buried secretly by their owners on the hills. In the beginning of the next summer the latter go at night when the crickets are to be found on the hills, and wend their way to the particular spots

where they have buried their successful crickets, and collect a number of new combatants, believing that the spirits of the departed insects go into the bodies of the crickets found in the same neighbourhood. When the war was going on between England and China in 1857, a captain of one of Her Majesty's ships, which was stationed at Whampoa, for the purpose of keeping up the blockade of the river, seeing as he thought a host of Chinese braves advancing over the neighbouring hills, landed his marines and blue-jackets, marched up the hills, and attacked the supposed enemy. The men on the hills, who carried lanterns, were armed, as it is unsafe for Chinese to be about without weapons at night. They returned the shots of the English sailors, and some men were wounded on each side. On approaching close to the enemy the English captain, who was in the meantime seriously wounded, discovered that his opponents were in truth villagers who were searching on the hills for crickets.

Before dismissing the subject of cricket-fighting, I must tell you one circumstance that came under my special notice, and which will, I think, rather astonish you. Many of the Buddhist monks indulge in this sport, and the other day at our monastic retreat at Taai-tung-Koo-tsze, we met with a Buddhist priest, who had come to

Canton from a monastery in the remote part of the county of Tuung-Koon, to attend the cricket-pits, and had brought with him six fighting-cricket. Out of these only one had proved victorious, but as it had won several battles, and gained six hundred dollars, which was a large sum of money for the priest, he was returning home the day we saw him, in high spirits.

I do not think I have told you how I have got on during the great and continuous heat of the past two or three months. It has at times been very trying, especially at night. We could scarcely breathe with the mosquito-curtains drawn, so, during August and September, we slept without them. We were not troubled, however, at all by the mosquitos during those two months. Perhaps, owing to the excessive heat, these tormentors had left the house and had gone into the open air. After dinner we find it too oppressive to stay in the house, as we do not get a breath of fresh air. We think this is in consequence of the short thick banyan trees which line the bund opposite to our verandah. We, therefore, go out and sit on the bund. You would be amused to see us. An ordinary glass lantern is hung upon a branch of one of the banyan trees to give us light. Our four dogs, two of the short-haired Chinese breed, and two of the long-haired kind,

lie stretched on the ground about us. Poor things, they seem to suffer a great deal in this hot weather. At nine o'clock one of our boys brings a tea-poy (small table) out of the house, the other carries a tray with the tea equipage on it, and we take our tea *al fresco*. Sometimes we do get a little breeze from the river. At all events the atmosphere is not so stifling as it is in the house, and on moonlight nights the scene on the river is very pretty.

LETTER XXXI.

CANTON, November 6th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

LAST week we paid another visit to the parade ground to be present at a grand triennial review that was to take place in the presence of the Viceroy, the Tartar General, and all the leading officials of the province. We engaged a slipper boat to be ready for us very early in the morning, and entered it at half-past six A.M. We had the advantage of having the tide in our favour, and arrived at the parade ground before half-past seven. The boatmen followed us from the boat, carrying our large bamboo chairs, as we knew from experience that it was wiser to have our own chairs

with us. The ground presented a very gay scene as we entered it; there was a large body of cavalry assembled at the end of the field, and the flags of the various regiments looked very bright. We had been told that the review would commence about six o'clock, but it was fully an hour after we arrived before the Viceroy made his appearance. There was again a long pause after the last of the mandarins had assembled, before this biggest of all the big officials in Canton arrived on the parade ground. The centre building was occupied by the Viceroy, Tartar General, and many high mandarins. Close to it three temporary buildings had been erected; one on the left for the sons of the officials, one by the side of the latter occupied by the Howqua family, and the third, on the right of the main building, placed at the disposal of foreigners. The whole effect was much like an English race-course, with its grand-stand and other buildings near it. This review was on a much larger scale than those we had previously seen, but most of the movements were similar to those on the former occasions. The varieties were: some wrestling matches, which took place immediately in front of the Viceroy's position, and some practice in shooting by young Tartar boys, who were from eight to twelve years of age. These boys were

good-looking, fine grown lads. They advanced in fives, each of the sets of five wearing the colours of one of the eight banners. They had on military hats with two foxes' tails hanging from the backs of them. Their military master advanced in the centre of them, and he bore a flag placed in a little stand on his back between his shoulders. As the boys reached the spot immediately in front of the Viceroy, they stopped, put themselves into most studied positions, formed a circle, advanced one by one in front of their master and fired their small carbines in turn. When all the movements had been performed by one set of five, they passed on with measured step, and the next five, clustering round their teacher, advanced and went through the same exercise. About twelve sets of these boys and their teachers passed before the Viceroy. They then advanced *en masse*, and stood before the Viceroy, who received them with a most gracious smile. Silver medals were presented to each of them. These little fellows looked every inch what they were—soldiers' sons, and Henry tells me that they are all brought up to serve in the army, and in this way the Tartar garrison in this city has been reinforced for three centuries past. The troops reviewed this day were Tartar soldiers only. Another new feature in this review was, that the officers themselves, of

all grades, most grave, dignified men, some of whom were nearly seventy years of age, were examined in archery practice. It was a strange sight to see these officers advance, step on to a dais placed a little way in front of the Viceroy's table, and solemnly discharge their arrows in turn. A target was placed at what appeared to me a short distance from the dais. A small red cloth was spread, on which the officer stood whose turn it was to shoot, another placed himself in readiness immediately behind, and the rest of the military mandarins arranged in two and two according to their buttons denoting their rank, remained in rows behind and advanced gradually to the dais. For a wonder, the Chinese use their bows much as Europeans use theirs. The arrows were tipped with sharp points of iron. Each man carried a quiver bearing five handsome arrows, the feathers of which were those of the argus pheasant. The bows, which were large, were made of ash, and were ornamented by snakes' skins. The target was large, in shape like the panel of a door, with three red bull's eyes placed at intervals on it. It was covered with white paper. It did not seem to matter in what part the arrows struck the target, as the gong was sounded each time one pierced it. You must not imagine that these military mandarins

looked like soldiers to our eyes. They were dressed in long blue figured silk robes, and in white or pale blue underskirts beautifully embroidered. Gay silk bags containing scent, which is used as a charm against evil, hung at their sides. High black satin boots with curious thick (three or four inches thick) white soles, and official hats trimmed with red fringe, completed their toilettes. The first officers who advanced to shoot wore the pale blue button on their hats, from which hung ravens' feathers. Then came the dark blue, crystal, white, and gold buttons in succession. Each man who struck the target with four out of the five arrows, received from the Viceroy two rolls of mandarin silk folded up in white paper. They bent the knee when the rolls were handed to them by one of the officials, who took them from a long table that was placed by the side of the official table. When these officers received the rolls of silk into their hands, they bowed to the ground, then raised the rolls high above their heads, thus honouring the Emperor, whose gift they were. Those who missed with two of the five arrows received only one roll of silk, and in one case, an officer missing the target with three arrows, had to retire without any present. It is difficult to convey to you the faintest idea of the studied dignity and solemnity

of expression in the countenances of these officers. All military mandarins have to undergo this triennial examination until they reach the rank of general in the army. The review finished as before, with artillery practice, marching in line, in circles, etc., the erection of city walls, and marching through the gates to the sound of the drum, conch, and other musical instruments.

LETTER XXXII.

CANTON, November 10th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

SINCE I sent my last descriptive letter to you, I have been with Minnie to see a bride leave her husband's house the third day after her marriage, on a visit of ceremony to her parents. We were told that she would start from her new home in a bridal-chair at nine o'clock A.M., so we hurried our breakfast and contrived to be at the bridegroom's (a doctor's) house by half-past nine. With true Chinese disregard of time, nothing was then ready for the bride's start, and we sat for more than an hour in a house on the opposite side of the street, which belongs also to the father of the bridegroom, before we were invited into the bridegroom's house. When we entered the

bridal-house, the customary presents were all prepared and men were just starting with them to the bride's parents' house. There were about ten pigs roasted whole lying in open red boxes. In other open cases there were fruits of various kinds, cakes, and large bundles of fire-crackers. The bearers, wearing red tunics, were in the act of slinging these boxes on bamboo poles to carry them to the parents of the bride. Some short time after these presents had been sent off, the bride appeared in the visitors' hall where we were sitting. She was dressed in her red wedding-dress ornamented with gold, and wore the gold marriage crown from which a thick beaded fringe hung over and nearly concealed her face. She came into the room with her hands joined and raised before her face in the orthodox bashful style of a Chinese bride. An amah walked on each side of her and held her by the elbows; they then assisted her to kneel before the ancestral altar, and raised her arms up and down as she performed her act of worship. They helped her to rise, and she advanced towards us, and chin-chinned us first, and then her numerous young sisters-in-law who were present. The bride was only sixteen and her husband seventeen years of age—the sisters-in-law of the bridegroom were all under twenty. The bride is small footed, and so of

course is a first wife. Poor girl, I pitied her, for she stood for nearly two hours on those poor little cramped painful feet, every now and then only leaning against the amahs, who sat down and thus supported her. The parents of the bridegroom now came in, and the bride knelt before them, and performed the kau-tau. After this a great deal of fun and merriment went on, all the young people went up to the bride and teased her, and, as my little friend explained to me, asked her for cakes, saying that she was very mean not to give them more. They crowded round her and told her jokingly that her life would be very miserable, that her husband would beat her, etc. etc.

Quite an uproar of merriment took place every now and then. No one heeded me, so I could sit and look on and see family rejoicings according to the manners and customs of this country.

I think the bridegroom was disappointed that I did not join in the jokes; but how could I? my tongue was tied by ignorance of the Chinese language.

All this time the wedding-chair was hidden away by some of the family party, a joke always practised on this particular day of the bride's return to her home. The company declared, as they

surrounded the young bride, that she should not go home to see her parents. She did not speak more than a few words the whole time, but I think she much enjoyed her position and feeling of importance. I was asked by the bridegroom what I thought of his bride, if she had a pretty face (of course I told my little friend to answer in as flattering terms as possible, with truth), but the bride was not nearly so pretty, I saw, when the veil of fringe was lifted from her face, as two young married women who were in the room with us. There are six sons in this family, and the father is not over forty-five. He and five of the sons practise as doctors. The youngest is sixteen, and is the only one unmarried; and he, too, is being educated for the medical profession. At last there was a decided movement at the outer door, and I thought the wedding-chair had arrived, but it proved to be the coolies bringing back the boxes from the house of the bride's parents. As is the established custom, the head and feet of the pigs were returned in the boxes and also a portion of the cakes and fruit. I was offered some of the latter, and then, for the fourth or fifth time, tea was handed round.

Just before twelve o'clock, when I was overcome with fatigue, and thought of leaving, the grand gold wedding-chair, richly ornamented with little

figures decorated with blue enamel made of kingfisher's feathers, came to the door.

It had at last been found, said the merry party round the bride. I mounted on a stool, as I was invited to do, to see the bride enter her bridal-chair. Her attendants then closed the door, and she became invisible to the vulgar gaze. The chair was very heavy, a mass of gilding and ornament; but it was not the private property of this family, but was, as is always the case, hired for the term of the wedding festivities, which last about eight days. The bride was to return to her husband's house at seven o'clock P.M. the same day.

LETTER XXXIII.

CANTON, November 26th, 1877

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I HAVE had a terrible shock since I last wrote to you, and I am sure you will be thankful to hear that Henry escaped a great danger in which he was placed last Sunday evening. He started for Whampoa as usual about five, to take his eight o'clock evening service, and had not proceeded above halfway, when he noticed a long snake-boat lying immediately in the path of his slipper boat. Henry sits upon a bamboo chair which is placed on

the toe of the slipper boat, and as he has no covering in front of him, he can see clearly anything that takes place around him. He had a presentiment of evil on perceiving the position of the snake-boat, but had scarcely time to examine it closely, before a shot was fired point blank at him from it. His boatmen called out in terror that they had an Englishman on board, but before they had got their words out, a second shot came from the pirates which struck the slipper boat. The boatmen ducked their heads, and swayed their bodies to the side of the boat, by which movement they upset Henry's chair, and he fell backwards. There was great danger of the slipper boat being capsized at that moment. On recovering his feet, Henry called out in Chinese and asked the men what they meant by firing at him, and the coolie and the boatmen screamed out that their passenger was a foreigner from the Chung-Lau (Bell-tower). The pirates, upon hearing this, turned their boat's head and rowed off as fast as possible across the river and entered a creek. There is no doubt that they were on the watch for Chinese, who often carry treasure about with them. In these winter months the pirates abound on the river, and render it very unsafe for passenger boats. The Chinese fear them greatly, and when a junk is going up the

river it is not only armed, but, as a rule, several junks start together and keep close to each other as long as possible. Passenger boats are also armed. The Chinese government is making a great effort to put down piracy, and, as I told you in a former letter, employ European officers on board their gun-boats for this purpose, but it must be long before the pirates are cleared off the river. A trading junk, apparently perfectly harmless, will turn pirate when an opportunity presents itself, and so there is a great want of confidence felt by the Chinese towards vessels of any sort. Robberies take place almost nightly on the river. When the sun sets, the boating population, to protect themselves from pirates, close and barricade the mouths of the creeks. I am enjoying the change in the weather very much. It is now quite cold in the early morning and evening, and we have already had a fire in our dining-room, and soon we shall require fires daily.

I have just sent for my furs from the pawn-shop. Does not this sound odd to English ears? The furs have been at this pawn-shop all the summer, and will thus have been saved from being devoured by the moth. It is most difficult to keep them free from this insect in one's own house—nearly impossible, but at the pawn-shops

they are quite safe. We shall only pay a couple of dollars to the owner of the pawn-shop when we receive our furs.

I shall be very glad of them now, for a marvellous change took place in the weather on the 20th inst. On that day Henry started for Whampoa, wearing his alpaca clothes. He could not have put on his cloth things as it was intensely hot in the morning, but at half-past seven P.M. down came the north wind, and in two or three hours it became very cold. The following morning we were thankful to put on our winter clothes. So you see that the cold, when it first comes in, is as difficult to bear as the heat; not that I grumble at it, as I am delighted with the change of weather, and am glad beyond measure that the heat of summer has at last passed away. We have both been really ill, since I last wrote, from eating some oysters which were sent us by a friend from Macao. On inquiry we discovered that these oysters had been opened before they arrived, a fact our servants did not let us know, and it was only when we were so ill, that one of them said "that oyster no plopa when he come this side, he no have got shell." We were poisoned by these bad oysters, and one of the coolies who ate some of them also became very ill. It is not uncommon for persons to be affected by the Macao

oysters, as the rocks upon which they grow are of a cupreous nature. We were obliged to call in our Chinese doctor ; but even with his care, we were very much indisposed for three days.

I must tell you of an amusing circumstance that has taken place in our house. A few weeks ago, one of my canaries, which had been placed in a small cage in the dining-room, was missing when the coolie entered the room early in the morning, and the only trace left of it was a few feathers on the bars of the cage. I was very much vexed, and inquired of the servants what animal could have entered the room through the venetians, and seized my pretty little favourite ? They all answered that it was "one piecee cat." Henry doubted the truth of this statement, as he did not think a cat could have entered by the partially closed venetians ; but the waiting boy and coolies persisted in saying that the enemy was a cat and not a rat, and that it was a particular cat from a neighbouring house. We asked them why, having seen it, they did not try to catch it ? upon which they told us it was a fierce cat, and that they were obliged to allow it to escape. I ordered the venetians to be more closely fastened, and again and again complained that my orders were not obeyed. When I remonstrated, the boy answered, "That piecee cat no come this side

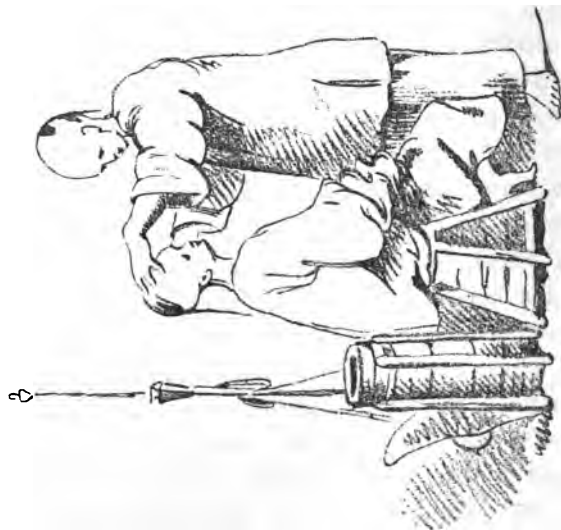
again, my can secure he no come again." It is only just now that I have learnt the true state of the case from Minnie. The coolie had not only caught the cat the morning it stole my bird from the cage in the dining-room, but he had also cooked and eaten it, and simply would not acknowledge to having caught it, for fear we should laugh at him for having made a meal of the enemy. Possibly too, he may have considered that our neighbour would complain of the summary justice executed upon the offender. Our waiting boy, who is twenty years of age, has just gone into the country to be married. We have given him in consequence a week's holiday. He will leave his bride at his father's house in the country, when he returns to us, and see her most likely only at very rare intervals. He, like all young men in China, has been betrothed from his youth. It is a most unusual thing to meet with a bachelor in China over twenty years of age, and when this is the case a man is looked upon as a bad citizen. Single life is of course observed by all Buddhist monks and by some of the priests of the sect of Tau.

Yesterday we received a very full budget by the English mail, fourteen letters, including those from home which did not arrive last week. We look out for the river steamer most anxiously when

the mail is expected. When our coolie comes in and says "This house no got chit," our disappointment is very great. We have much better food now the weather is cool, and there is a great improvement in the meat, which is much more tender. I think you will be interested to hear what we can now procure in the way of food, vegetables and fruit. Good game comes down from Shanghai, and we have received a present of pheasants, teal, and a hare from that port. The game was in very good preservation after its journey of over nine hundred miles. We have very good vegetables just now, and amongst them are peas, potatoes, sweet potatoes, turnips, small carrots, and cabbages. Our fruit at this season consists of sweet oranges, native walnuts, native chestnuts, persimmons, bananas, etc. I do not remember telling you about one thing that has again and again amused me in our household. Occasionally when we pass through our servants' quarters to the boat, we see one or other of them in the hands of a barber, having his head shaved, or his tail trimmed and plaited. The tails of many of the Chinese are very long and thick. This remark applies to young and middle-aged men only, for a man in years has generally a very small and short portion of hair in his tail, the rest of it being composed of silk. The barber also trims



HARDER WASHING THE HEAD OF HIS CUSTOMER.



BARBER TRIMMING THE EYEBROWS OF HIS CUSTOMER.

the eyebrows of his customer and reduces them to a slender line, and removes all superfluous hair from his face and ears. Shaving and hairdressing are generally done in public in China, and I have often been amused at watching the process going on *al fresco*.

LETTER XXXIV.

CANTON, December 6th, 1877.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I WONDER if you picture us as we really are now. Before I left England I did not realise the fact of the winter being as cold as it is here, and I fancy few people who have not experienced it know what kind of winter one has in the south of China. We have a fire in our bedroom at night, and the room is still so cold that I have bought a high screen to place by the side of the bed to shelter us from the draught. These houses are built with a view to make them as cool as possible in summer, and so it is very difficult to shut out the cold wind in winter. Our dogs can no longer go out into the verandah at night, and two of them sleep in our room, and two on the landing at the top of the staircase. They cause us some trouble at night. Our youngest one (we have given away the youngest of all, as he would

not stay with us, but lived entirely in the servants' offices) is most jealous of one of the older dogs, and it is most difficult to keep him quiet. In fact, the young one does not rest until the old dog is driven into a corner. The growl of these dogs which precedes a fight is enough to disturb a household. They much resemble in form and colour the Esquimaux dog. We owe our safety to one of our favourites; for some time ago, when we had just fallen asleep, one of the older dogs in the verandah barked furiously. We both started from sleep, and felt conscious that some one was in the bedroom, and Henry called out in Chinese, "Who is there?" The intruder in his flight must have touched the towel-horse, as it was shaken and nearly knocked over, and there is no doubt that he escaped by the open window close to it. Our watches and jewellery were on that side of the room along which he was approaching, and we think that he must have been aware of it. I much dread any fracas with a Chinese thief, for, although Henry is very powerful, he would have no chance with a man of this kind. For the thieves are generally armed with knives, and their tails, which are false, are filled with fish-hooks. If a guard seize a prisoner, he catches him by the tail and twists it round his arm. I have seen this

done myself, so I suppose that is the reason why thieves adopt the expedient of wearing false tails. Should a burglar be caught with arms upon him, he is decapitated according to Chinese law. This makes burglars very reckless, and if resisted, they would not hesitate to commit murder, if by doing so they could make good their escape.

During one of our excursions lately, we visited the Buddhist nunnery, which bears the name of T'aan-To-Om. We saw in the principal shrine an idol of Buddha, before which fifty nuns say their prayers morning and evening. Unless I had been informed to the contrary, I should have concluded that the persons who gathered around us on our entering the quadrangle of the nunnery were Buddhist monks, as the dress is similar. The nuns' heads are entirely shaved; they wear tunics, white stockings, and black shoes, like the priests. It is supposed that this dress was adopted to enable the nuns to go about the streets without being observed. A few days ago, we saw what we both considered to be a nun entering the English chemist's shop where we were going. We asked if it were a nun we had seen, but were told by the chemist that it was a young nobleman, who had taken a vow to live as a monk for a certain period. He had therefore

shaved his head and adopted the monk's habit. The nuns are consecrated at the same time as the monks.

I have not yet mentioned one curious feature of a Buddhist priest's appearance : you will notice at once that his head, which is entirely shaven, has several little white scars on it. These are vows which are burnt into his head by the end of a lighted incense stick. A monk not only takes the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience at his ordination ; he takes other vows according to his desire, such as abstaining from wine, from meat, from brawling, from gambling, etc. The latter is, however, a vice much indulged in by the priests, many of whom disregard their vows in a very open manner. We went into the temple of Sheng-Wong the same day, and there saw many most curious representations of the Buddhist hades. These figures are placed in various compartments on each side of the great quadrangle of the temple. In each of these compartments a king sitting in judgment, surrounded by his ministers of justice, is represented. In one compartment there are clay figures of men and women, who are undergoing various torments inflicted on them by order of the king, for unrepented sin. In a second, Buddhist monks and nuns, who have received money for saying prayers

for the repose of souls, and have neglected to do so, are confined in a dark tower, and by the light of a very small lamp are condemned to read liturgical services, printed in the smallest type possible. In another representation, wicked men are made to gaze in a mirror upon the forms of beasts, reptiles, insects, etc., one or other form of which their souls will animate on their return to earth. In another, homicides are surrounded by water, which they cannot obtain, and are tantalised by the sight of it, while they suffer the agonies of thirst. Twice a month they have to undergo all the pains of body and soul which their victims have gone through at their hands. Various horrors, such as being ground in a mill, returning to life again, to be re-ground—burning in flames of fire—thrown on to spikes—being decapitated, then made whole in body, to be again decapitated—roasted alive under a red-hot bell—sawn asunder—thrown into caldrons of boiling oil, are all depicted, with other varieties of torture. In fact, the whole representations recalled to my mind a book I had much feared in my early youth, but which was highly valued by my nurse—Fox's 'Book of Martyrs.'

LETTER XXXV.

CANTON, January 1st, 1878.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

WE have had two or three warm days this last week, and much rain. Our house has become very damp again, and the marble pavement of the hall looks as if pails of water had been thrown upon it. Old residents say it is unusually warm and damp for the time of year. The mosquitos are unendurable; they are buzzing in my ears, and settling on my hands as I write. All our servants came in to chin-chin us this morning early, and presented us with their large red paper visiting cards, and several Chinese have called to wish Henry a happy new year. The day is much observed in our settlement. Gentlemen of all nations make congratulatory calls upon the ladies. I had a very great number of visitors to receive alone, as Henry of course was also engaged in paying new year's visits.

We have been into the city two or three times since I last wrote to you, spending our time chiefly in the street called Sai-Loi-Ch'oh Ti, where we have bought several articles of black wood furniture. The streets, at this time of the year, are very much crowded with open-air stalls of all kinds, owing to the near approach of the

Chinese new year. Some of these stalls contain wearing apparel; others, shoes and caps; and others, articles of vertu. The latter are bought to give away as new-year's presents. Fruit-



BOY GAMBLING FOR FRUIT.

stalls are especially numerous, and are generally surrounded by little boys who gamble with the stall-keeper for the fruit. These open-air fruit-stalls now display oranges, bananas, apples, pears,

and pea-nuts. The fruit must be very tempting to the boys, but so great is their innate love of gambling that they would rather run the risk of losing the fruit than forego the pleasure of throwing the dice. The propensity for gambling, however, is not confined to boys, in China, men and women being also very much addicted to that vice.

I have not told you, I think, how much we are occasionally startled by salutes fired off from the men-of-war which come up to Canton. They anchor so close to Shameen, that the vibration is great from the guns; the windows of our house rattle, and the panes of glass seem to be in jeopardy. Last Sunday when we were at church, and whilst Henry was preaching, we were startled by the guns of a French ship of war firing a royal salute in honour of a visit from the Chinese Viceroy. The noise was simply deafening, and so prolonged, as the salute was fired slowly, that Henry was obliged to make a long pause in his sermon. The river is at all times a scene of noise and bustle, most particularly so where the boats congregate near the steamers, but our end of Shameen is sufficiently noisy. It was difficult to sleep during the summer when our bedroom-windows were wide open. About one or two o'clock A.M. we were often awoken by salvoes of fire-crackers which were fired when Chinese boats were starting

on their voyages. The boat population do not sleep the night through, but seem to catch sleep at intervals during the night and day. We are never free during the summer from noise on the river. When a death takes place in any of the boats, the relations immediately begin to howl, and continue to do so at intervals until the body is buried. It is a most distressing sound at night, and one which we frequently hear. Quarrels often take place amongst the boat people, and they become much excited and scream one to the other, sometimes for ten minutes or so, and sometimes for hours together. In fact there is scarcely an hour during the night, in summer, when complete stillness reigns on the river. The smallness of sleeping accommodation on board the boats for the families living in them may partly account for this restlessness and wakefulness of the boat population.

What a strange life these boat people live! They are born in their boats, marry from their boats (boatmen marrying boatwomen) and take their brides home to their boats, three generations often occupying the same floating home. Further, they die in their boats, and are conveyed to the grave in their boats. When a member of a boat family dies, the body is taken to a vast cemetery on the banks of the river, five or six miles to the west of the city of Canton. Many

of the boatmen serve as sailors on board the ocean-going junks and other native trading vessels, and are consequently away for several weeks or even months at a time. On returning from their voyages they find their boats exactly in the same position as that in which they left them. This, however, is no longer a matter of surprise, when one learns that there is a marine magistrate called the Hoi-Teng, who assigns to each boat its position on the river, in which it has an undisputed right to remain year after year. The boat population is regarded with contempt by people living on shore, and to every boatwoman the opprobrious epithet of "water-hen" is applied.

LETTER XXXVI.

CANTON, March 20th, 1878.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I TAKE up my pen again after a rest of two months to write you one of my descriptive letters. Little of importance has happened during my silence. The Chinese new year has been observed as usual. Salvoes of fire-crackers were let off without ceasing from eight o'clock of the last night of the old year, until daylight of the first day of the new year. The temples, small and great throughout this vast city, were open the

whole night, and were crowded by worshippers, who were offering thanks for the good things received during the year passing away, and praying for mercies during the year just dawning. All the elders of the districts who attended these ceremonies wore their official robes. Worship, too, was paid to all the State deities by the leading officials of the city. In each dwelling-house the ancestral altars, and those in honour of the tutelary gods, were lighted up during the greater part of the night, and around them were gathered all the members of the family. During the few days in which the festivities of the new year are observed, all the shops are closed and Canton seems to be deserted. The passenger boats are crowded with men and women who are going into the country to visit friends. Many failures have taken place as usual at the new year. The shops which were closed owing to insolvency, have had red papers affixed to the doors, stating that the owners were bankrupts, and the amount of liabilities they had incurred. All debts must be paid before the new year, and the man who cannot meet his demands then, must declare himself a bankrupt. During the two or three last days of the Chinese year, articles which have been previously exposed for sale at a high price, are offered at a much lower rate for cash. Henry has been very anxious for me to go over one of

the large ocean-going junks, all of which are now preparing for sea. We were in a sampan a few days ago, and in passing one of these junks, we made up our minds to go on board. I can scarcely describe the curious appearance of these vessels. The sterns are very high and wide, and are richly ornamented with painted decorations, such as the Chinese Phoenix with outstretched wings and white plumage on a bright red ground. The bows are also decorated with coloured representations of dragons, etc. The men belonging to the junk showed no surprise when I arrived on board their ship, although most probably I was the first European lady who had ever visited one of these ocean junks. On examining this ship, I saw she was very long and curiously divided into water-tight compartments. The saloon, which we entered on invitation, was at the stern, and we had to descend by deep steps into it from the deck. I noticed a richly carved and gilded altar with a lighted lamp hanging before it, at the end of the saloon, and in a niche was the image of Tien-Hau, the goddess worshipped by all sailors. This goddess is regarded by the Chinese as the queen of heaven. Before the vessel starts on any voyage, Tauist priests are engaged to go on board and hold a religious service, asking for the goddess's protection of the ship and crew during the ensuing voyage. On the deck

there were five large cisterns for fresh water, made of wooden planks, the seams of which were made water-tight by means of chunam. The two masts of the vessel were without yards, and, having little or no rigging, looked very bare. The rudder and its tiller were colossal in size. We asked to see the compass, which we found to be one of a most primitive kind, possibly not much improved since its use was first discovered by the Chinese, B.C. 2634. We were surprised when one of the sailors accosted us in broken English, and on inquiring of him where he had learnt it, he told us that he had been a sailor on an English steamer. These ocean junks carry merchandise from one port to another. Their number has of late much decreased in consequence of the great many English steamers now employed in these waters. This morning a friend, who is captain of one of the Chinese gun-boats, took us in a small steam launch to his ship. Five of these gun-boats belonging to the Chinese government, which were built in England, are manned by Chinese, and are commanded and officered by Englishmen. They are employed by the Chinese government to pursue and destroy pirates, and to demolish villages inhabited by them. Captain Godsil has just returned from a very successful voyage. He destroyed in the gulf of Tonquin eleven piratical junks, and two piratical villages. He accomplished

this with his own crew only, who do not muster more than eighty. The mandarin (one of whom always accompanies these vessels so that he may be responsible to his government for any junks taken or villages destroyed) had gone off in a boat with some of Captain Godsil's men, to collect the crews of his war junks and prepare for the attack. He did not hurry back, and arrived an hour and a half after the piratical junks had been captured and the villages destroyed by Captain Godsil. There is not the slightest chance of the true description of this adventure reaching the Viceroy's ears, as the mandarin sends in the report of the voyage to him, and so of course will take the whole credit of the affair to himself, and will probably receive promotion for his supposed daring exploit.

All the pirates captured by Captain Godsil, amounting to two hundred men, were sent to the prison in the district where they were taken, and will be, or rather are probably already executed.

The Chinese man-of-war's men look remarkably well. They are now dressed in their winter uniform, blue cotton shirt and trousers, with a bright red sash round their waists. Their hats are large straw hats with wide brims, worn off the forehead. In summer their uniform is white, with the red sash. We witnessed a most interesting

festival, fourteen days ago, which was given in honour of the Tu-ti (pronounced Too-te), the gods of the earth. This festival is held in many parts of the city, and generally takes place in the squares in front of temples. There was a great crowd where we were, and for some time, to avoid the pressure of the people, we sat in the committee-room of the temple. Here men were writing names of the givers of prizes on pieces of red paper. As usual, the ceremony did not begin for more than an hour after the time advertised. When the preparations were nearly completed we went out of the committee-room and were admitted into a little open-air theatre, belonging to, and opposite, the temple, and a form was placed for us on which we stood to witness the proceedings.

The prizes were displayed on shelves in the open-air theatre, and were, we thought, most trumpery in character. They consisted of high erections ornamented with red and white paper, artificial flowers, and figures made in pasteboard and coloured.

We were told, however, that some of the prizes were valuable, as jadestone bangles were suspended from them. These erections represented houses of several storeys, with lots of little figures in them, many of which nodded their heads, and shook their arms and legs. Each prize was numbered, and differed in form and decoration. In some there were representations of men on

horseback (such creatures the horses were), and small figures dressed in grand silk, etc. The faces of all the figures were of the same much-admired style. The eyebrows slanted up towards the forehead, the eyes were narrow slits. In the centre of the square a platform had been erected, on which three men stood, and when the proper time arrived, they received from one of the members of the guild which defrayed the costs of the festival, a short bamboo gun, from which, when it was fired off, a small ball shot up high into the air. As it was descending there was a great scuffle amongst the dense crowd eager to catch it, and sometimes a fight took place. The man who was so fortunate as to catch it, walked up some steps to the elders of the district who were seated on a dais, and his name was inscribed in a book as the winner of the particular prize which had just been shot for. The first two successful men belonged to the upper classes, others who won prizes were of the lower orders. It is supposed by the Chinese that the ball is directed towards the man who catches it, by the Tu-ti, and therefore he is regarded as favoured by these gods. The prizes are carried to the homes of those who have gained them, after the ceremony is over, to the accompaniment of music, and they are placed upon ancestral altars. They are held to be most acceptable offerings to the spirits of departed ancestors. In the

usual thrifty way of the Chinese, the guild secures the prizes for the following year by making each winner enter his name in a book, with a written promise to give at the festival of Tu-ti, in the following year, a prize costing the same amount of money as the one he has just received. I was much amused to see the means employed to describe the prize and its number to the people. Two men walked about with long bamboo poles bent at the top, from which swung pieces of red paper with the number and description of the prize on them in Chinese characters. The wind was high, and the ball, when discharged from the miniature gun, often alighted on the wide roof of the temple, and, when this was the case, men who were placed on the roof threw it amidst the crowd below. Some men of most respectable appearance held long strings of fire-crackers which they let off. The loud and long-continued report was deafening—and a volley of these fire-crackers was let off between each struggle for a prize. Gongs and musical instruments added their quota to the prevailing hubbub. The crowd was great and was composed of the lowest class of people as well as of some well-dressed men. When we passed through them on leaving our retreat, they were very polite. They stared, of course, but made way for us.

Amongst the few people who were admitted to

the small open-air theatre, besides ourselves, was a beautiful Tartar girl, who had regular features and a transparent complexion. She would have made a lovely picture just as she was, with a curious little band of bright-coloured stuff worn across her forehead.

On leaving the square in which this festival was being celebrated, we went into a very fine ancestral hall belonging to the clan Tam. It is the largest building of the kind in Canton. Above the altar we saw a vast number of ancestral tablets, which are computed at from three thousand to four thousand. In the centre of the building there is a very spacious quadrangle on each side of which are several cells for the use of students. All members of the clan Tam can claim board and lodging in this ancestral hall when reading for their degrees. When we visited it many young men, members of the clan, were residing in it, and preparing themselves for the ensuing literary examinations. Henry had been far from well all the morning, and now felt that it would be impossible for him to continue his walk home. He, therefore, went out of the hall, in order to hire a chair, and I was thus left alone for several minutes. For some time I had seen several pairs of black eyes peeping at me from the various apartments on each side. The students now becoming bolder, advanced, stared at me and were evidently much surprised, and

apparently shocked to see me in their hall. I did not at the time understand the cause of their surprise, nor had I heard then that one of the many rules painted on a board placed in the porch of the hall was as follows: "Females shall not be allowed to enter this building." When Henry returned to me we inspected a lofty brick tower forming a part of this large pile of ancestral buildings. To this tower, dedicated to Man-Chaong, the god of learning, the students of the clan resort and pray to the idol for success in their approaching literary examinations.

On continuing our journey through the city towards Shameen, we saw several gatherings in honour of the Tu-ti. They were similar, in all respects, to the one which I have just described.

In the evening of this day we went by invitation to a Chinese gentleman's house to see a private display of fireworks which he was giving in honour of the Tu-ti. We sat in the picturesque garden, that is, the ladies of the family and I, immediately close to a large piece of artificial water. On the opposite side of it stood the family theatre* with its beautiful, carved double roof. A temporary bamboo platform had been erected over the pond, and on this the fireworks were let off. The display was very grand,

* As a rule, wealthy Chinese families have private theatres in their houses or grounds, more especially to provide amusement for the ladies of the families.

and altogether unlike any fireworks I had seen in Europe. There were thirteen set pieces representing groups of figures which constantly changed their positions. In one, a man mounted on a horse, fell from the animal and lay beside it. In another a dragon vomited fire. Out of one piece, which was very well managed, strings of pagodas fell down, and from another, innumerable lanterns were suspended. Each of these set pieces ended in a dazzling display of gold and silver fire.

The scene around me was truly oriental. We ladies were surrounded by innumerable amahs and slaves, who waited upon and chatted with us. The elder ladies smoked, that is to say they took occasional whiffs out of copper pipes with long stems, presented to them by the amahs. They just turned their heads slightly, took whiffs, and the pipes were withdrawn by the amahs, to be re-lighted in a few minutes. The amahs frequently handed lacquered boxes divided into compartments and filled with various kinds of preserved fruits.

The ladies were either eating some of this fruit or splitting melon seeds between their front teeth, the whole time. I very much liked the sugarcandy and the preserved fruits, but I could not swallow some of the sweets that were put into my mouth, which had at the same time a sweet, a bitter, and an acid flavour. My enjoyment of

the fruit was also much diminished by the fact that the particular amah, who waited upon me, took a silver hair-pin from her coiffure, stuck it into the preserve, and then put the preserve into my mouth. The gentlemen were seated at some distance from us, and during the whole evening there was no communication between the party of gentlemen and that of the ladies. We thoroughly enjoyed our evening, and did not return home until midnight.

LETTER XXXVII.

CANTON, March 26th, 1878.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

WE had a very pleasant Chinese luncheon-party two or three days ago. Amongst our guests was our friend Mr. 'Ng, who has the beautiful house and grounds at Honam. You can imagine the size of his residence, when I tell you that it takes two hours to go over the house, and its numerous gardens and garden houses. He was accompanied by three of his friends, one of whom was an ex-chief justice of the vast province of Szechuen, which in area is larger than England. He filled a most responsible and high position. I could only wonder, as I looked at him, how many miserable prisoners he had con-

demned to be executed. He is a fine-looking man, and the dress he wore was very handsome. His long, dark rich brown silk coat was lined throughout with fur; he showed us this fur lining when we pressed him to sit near the fire. It is by thick clothing that the Chinese protect themselves from cold. Fire-places are not allowed in any of the houses, kitchens alone excepted, for fear of the harm that might ensue, in case of accident, to neighbouring dwellings in the narrow and thickly-populated streets. Small charcoal fires, enclosed in bronze or earthenware pans, are used by the Chinese in very cold weather. These portable fires are placed generally in the centre of the sitting-rooms, and the members of the family congregate around them. The chief justice had very long nails on four of his fingers; they were from two to three inches in length. I cannot understand how he and others who have these very long nails preserve them from injury, as they do not wear shields over them in society. At night, however, they enclose them in silver or bamboo tubes. I sat at table with our Chinese guests, Henry having explained to them previously, that it is the European custom for the ladies to dine with the gentlemen of their families. The chief justice sat by my side at the top of the table, and Mr. 'Ng was on my left. We gave an European luncheon, only taking care to have no

beef on table, and to have the soup made of chicken. Before our guests touched the soup, they asked the question, "Is there any beef in it?" It is against the teaching of Confucius to eat oxen; he forbids his followers to do so on account of that animal's usefulness in the service of man. Our Chinese guests expressed great satisfaction with pork chops, and also with pancakes and plum pudding which we had provided for them. Before our friends arrived, a large box containing a present from the chief justice was sent to us. Two sets of silk costumes were in the box, one for our little boy and one for our little girl. In the former the coat was a bright green, and the trousers a brilliant red. The jacket for our baby girl was violet, and the trousers were green. A little cap of many colours for the boy, with a row of silver-gilt figures to wear round it, and a bright coloured head-dress, to be worn round the forehead (the top of the head being uncovered), for our little girl, accompanied the other garments. There were also silver-gilt bangles, and a pair of jadestone bangles, both very small in size, for immediate use, a silver chain and an ornament in silver, representing the Ki-lun, or fabulous animal, for the boy's neck, and a Chinese lock on a tiny silver chain for our baby girl. Two card-cases

of carved sandal-wood completed the present. When we thanked the mandarin for his handsome gift, he said in true Chinese style, "It is only a very small present, indeed it is but a trifle." He fortunately is a native of the province of Canton, so Henry and he kept up a conversation together, whilst Mr. 'Ng did his best with me in pigeon English. It was most embarrassing to have the chief justice at my side, and not to be able to say a word to him. I have told you before how much literary degrees are valued in this country. To whatever class a man may belong, if he attain the B.A. degree, or still more the M.A. degree, he is at once raised in social position. A man who takes his Doctor's degree confers an honour on his whole clan, and becomes a man of distinction. Therefore, when these gentlemen on inquiry learned that Henry had taken his Doctor's degree, it not only raised him but also me in their estimation. They at once rose, chin-chinned Henry, and turning to me addressed me as "Taai-Taai," a higher title than "Nai-Nai." I have not yet told you, I believe, that some few days ago we received a congratulatory present from a military mandarin. It not only consisted of silk clothes, bangles and ornaments for our children, but also comprised a large packet of sugar, another of preserved fruit, a third of a different

kind of fruit, and a small chest of tea. All the presents were done up in red paper, and visiting cards of the mandarin accompanied them.

After our Chinese guests had left, we went in our sampan to Paak-Hok-Tuung, and walked thence to Haang-Kau-Cha-Shaan, where there is a small tea plantation. The tea shrub is an evergreen and greatly resembles the box-tree with which we are so familiar in England. It grows to a height of two or three feet. We saw men and women picking leaves from the plants, and putting them into baskets which they held on their arms. I noticed that they used great care, picking one leaf only at a time from the shrubs. On the following day I had an opportunity of visiting a tea-factory, where I saw the process of picking out stems and bad leaves from quantities of tea spread on rattan-trays. This was done by women and girls who employed both hands at a time with great dexterity. In another department of the factory, I saw men sieving and winnowing tea leaves, the machine used for winnowing being precisely similar to the machine employed by English farmers in winnowing grain. In another department through which we passed, men were casting tea leaves into large immoveable fire-pans, rendered hot by charcoal fires. To prevent the leaves from burning, they continually stirred them up with their hands.

The men, who were very scantily clothed, were dripping with perspiration whilst engaged in this work. I was somewhat startled on seeing the means used to make Canton green teas. To produce the colour, Prussian blue and turmeric were mixed with the tea leaves. Gypsum was also added, and when I asked the reason why this was done, I was told that it was to give a pungent flavour to the mixture. We finally went into the packing room, and I was much amused at seeing men pressing tea into tea chests by means of their naked feet.

We arrived at Canton last year just too late to see the State worship and other ceremonies observed by the mandarins at the opening of the ploughing season. We resolved, therefore, to attend them this year, and hearing a few days ago that they were to take place yesterday, we made all the necessary preparations for a visit to the Sin-Nuung-Taau, a temple dedicated to the god of agriculture, where they were to be held. We arose at two A. M., and went in a sampan to a landing-place within half a mile of the temple. When we left the boat it was very dark, and we had to walk over some broken ground, which was attended with difficulty, our only light being a large paper lantern, on which our surname and address were painted in big red characters. We afterwards met several Chinese gentlemen who

were on the same errand as ourselves. Their attendants were bearing lanterns before them, as in China no one is considered respectable who goes out after dark without a lantern. On approaching the temple, we passed, at intervals, groups of soldiers squatting round large lanterns placed on tripods. They were awaiting the arrival of the great mandarins. Their piled arms, consisting of matchlocks, spears, and battle-axes, with gay banners arranged behind them, looked most picturesque as seen by the dim light of the lanterns. Looking into the temple, we saw in the centre of the quadrangle a high stone dais or altar, upon which sacrifices of sheep and swine, and offerings of fruits were placed. At length, all the officials arrived, and upon entering the temple at once engaged in worship. As the temple, which is very small, was overcrowded and stiflingly hot, we quickly withdrew and seated ourselves on a bench at the gates of the Wing-Shing-Tsze, or "City of the Dead," which was close by. It was a strange, weird-looking scene upon which we gazed; daylight was gradually approaching, and we could just distinguish the sacred storks (or night herons as they may be called) flying to and from their nests in the thickly-wooded grove of the City of the Dead behind us. It was now five o'clock, and we saw many labourers going to their daily work, and several market-gardeners

passed us, carrying the produce of their gardens towards the city. They were evidently amused at our appearance, as they all turned round and stared at us. Several lepers, having a most loathsome appearance, also passed the place where we were sitting. They came from some mat huts erected for them on the top of a neighbouring hill by humane persons, there being no room for them in the asylum for lepers. These unfortunate creatures had not come to see the State ceremony which was then being held, but to await the arrival of funeral processions passing from the city to the neighbouring cemeteries, with the view of extorting money from the mourners. This custom is practised daily by lepers. Immediately in front of us there was a small field, belonging to the temple of the god of agriculture, irrigated and made ready for ploughing. It was intersected by nine long narrow wooden platforms, each of which was raised about a foot from the ground and covered by a mat roof. The mandarins, when ploughing, walked along these temporary platforms, and so avoided the mud and slush with which the paddy field was covered. Nine peasants dressed in yellow now brought red ploughs into the field, to each of which a buffalo was yoked. No sooner were these preparations completed than a stir amongst the soldiers on duty at the gates of the temple showed

that the officials had finished their worship. We, therefore, took our position close to the platform on which the Viceroy was to walk while ploughing his furrows. We now observed that all the officials, attended by a number of singing boys wearing yellow robes, were coming towards the field. The Viceroy and governor were conducted to the two centre platforms; the Tartar General, the Provincial Treasurer, the Chief Justice, the Literary Chancellor, and three other officials, occupying the side platforms. These nine high mandarins were dressed alike in robes which are only worn on this and similar occasions. The robes were long, made in dark blue silk, with patterns of dragons on them worked in gold thread. They were tucked up in front by belts worn round the waist. The costumes were completed by court hats trimmed with red floss fringe. Each official carried a small wand in his hand, which was wound round by silk threads of five colours. These wands were supposed to represent whips. The singing boys now arranged themselves on the banks of the paddy field, and at the command of the master of ceremonies burst forth into hymns of praise. The officials, too, at this moment, placed their hands on the ploughs and began to plough their nine furrows. Each of these State ploughmen was followed by two mandarins, who scattered

rice seed from boxes, which they held in their hands. These amateur ploughmen and sowers of seed walked up and down their respective platforms nine times, and the ceremony was then brought to a close.

You would have been greatly amused had you witnessed this State ceremony. The officials were brimful of pomposity, walking in the peculiar mandarin gait, with countenances unmoved, all expression banished from them. This ceremony is observed on the same day, throughout the length and breadth of China. The Emperor himself takes part in it, ploughing his nine furrows with a yellow plough. However much we may laugh at some of the details of this singular ceremony, we must acknowledge that a religious feeling has prompted the nation at large to ask a blessing upon the plough and all arable lands of the country. It is of great antiquity, having been observed by the Chinese for several centuries. On our way to rejoin our boat we met a strange procession of thirty or forty men dressed in long white sackcloth garments, with white bandages, like nightcaps, round their heads. They were walking in Indian file along a narrow bank. We conjectured that they were going to the "City of the Dead" to remove the remains of a departed relative to a newly-made tomb in one

of the neighbouring cemeteries. Still, these mourners must have been near of kin to the deceased, as sackcloth garments are only worn by those immediately related to the departed one. Friends attending a funeral wear a strip of white cloth only round their foreheads.

LETTER XXXVIII.

CANTON, April 6th, 1878.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

WE are anxious to make several excursions up the river before the weather becomes too warm for us to enjoy them, so we arranged yesterday to go up the river as far as Meou-Yu-Tau, a distance of twenty-five miles from Canton. We were obliged to wait until eleven o'clock A.M., when the tide turned in our favour. We engaged a slipper boat with four strong men in it, and as Henry was anxious for us to see as much as possible of the country, we had the mat roof taken off; the boat thus became nothing more than a kind of raft. Most fortunately we had a lovely day for our excursion, the sun shining fiercely only at intervals. On going up the river we soon lost all trace of the city of Canton, and were in the midst of very pretty scenery. The Pearl River is noble in its width, and the branch of it on which we were

travelling bends constantly; the effect in many parts was like lake scenery. The chains of mountains were beautiful, that of the White Cloud Mountains, the favourite resort of all Europeans living in Canton, being on the right as we passed up the river. In front of us there was another chain, called by the Chinese "The Three Chignons," from the fact that each of its three peaks is supposed to resemble a Chinese lady's coiffure. We passed a great number of wheat fields, also some rice lands. The small beds of the seedlings ready to be transplanted into larger fields, were brilliantly green in colour. There were many herds of buffaloes on the banks of the river belonging to the various farms we passed. Many of the farmers must be rich men, to judge by the large herds of buffaloes kept on their farms. In many cases these animals were ploughing the land. The country was beautiful through which we passed, with mountains in the distance, paddy and wheat fields, and beautiful groves of bamboo and other trees in the foreground; and then, to add to the charm of the scene, there were many and various shaped boats on the river. Several passenger boats passed us, with their large butterfly-wing shaped sails spread, crowded with passengers who were going to their native villages to worship the tombs. On the hills were

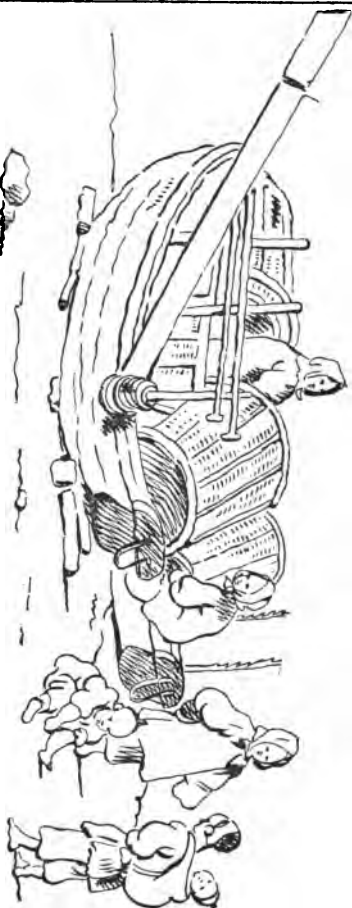
groups of Chinese engaged in religious worship at the various graves. The last hour of our journey we made very slow progress, as the tide had turned against us. Our men got out of the boat and went on to the left-hand bank of the river to tow us. Poor men, they had hard work, and were obliged occasionally to take to swimming, as there were so many gaps in the bank, caused by the tributary streams flowing into the main river. This must, one would think, have been injurious to them, considering the state of intense heat they were in from towing the boat. They were very cheerful, and did not grumble once during their hard day's work. At last we came in sight of our destination, a literary pagoda,* but it was still some long way off, and it took us an hour longer to reach it. The river had become very narrow, and the scenery around was lovely. We were now at the foot of the Chignon Mountains, and passed quite near to several picturesque villages, each one having its large ancestral hall and tutelary temple. We went close to one village,

* These literary pagodas abound on the banks of the rivers and creeks around Canton. They are supposed to resemble a Chinese pencil in form—hence their name. They are built either in three or five storeys, very rarely in storeys of an even number. They are often beautifully ornamented with porcelain frescoes and arabesques. They differ from the larger pagodas somewhat in form, and have no projecting verandahs.

the men pulling towards it, in order to avoid the strong current in the middle of the stream. The inhabitants ran out of their houses and clustered on the banks of the river to stare at us. I was much struck with the pretty picture a ferry-boat made, with its landing-place, on the opposite side of the river. Men and women, with their large picturesque hats, were waiting there for the ferry-boat. This landing-place was covered over by a stone roof, evidently erected by some one as a work of merit to shelter wayfarers when waiting to cross the ferry. I saw, also, several sampans drawn up on the bank of the river near to this village. The children of the boats were playing round the only homes they knew, and were apparently enjoying their run ashore. Shortly after this we arrived at the point where we intended to lunch. It was now three o'clock in the afternoon. The scene before us was so lovely that I expressed a wish to remain a week at this place, but you will see that I soon had reason to change my mind.

There are three literary pagodas in sight at this point, and it was at the foot of the first that we arranged to have our luncheon. We got out of our boat and took up our position with our faces turned to the river, our backs resting against the side of the hill. Close to us there was a

BOAT-CHILDREN ASHORE.



beautiful herd of oxen with faces much resembling Alderney cattle. The peculiar humps, however, which they had on their shoulders made them most unlike European oxen. There was a ferry at this place, and whilst the coolie was preparing our luncheon, we were much interested at watching the men who were endeavouring to make the oxen swim across the river. At last, as the creatures could not be induced to go alone, they tied three of them together, and a man taking the end of the rope in his hand entered the ferry-boat. Another man tied three more oxen together, and holding the rope in his hand also got into the boat. The animals were now compelled to take to the water, and we saw them swim across the river, which is tolerably deep and wide at this point, their heads only being visible out of the water. When our coolie had prepared everything, we sat down to our luncheon with good appetites, making up our minds to explore the hill and the pagoda after we had refreshed ourselves. Whilst we were lunching, a man who had crossed in the returning ferry-boat, came up and spoke to Henry. He was quite civil in manner, and drank a cup of tea which was handed to him. He then left and went on to a village which was not more than a quarter of a mile from us. We continued our luncheon in perfect tranquillity of mind,

our dog Ah-Fa frisking about us. In a short time three men came up from the village and stood close to us, eyeing the spoons, and everything we had with us. They were much struck with our bamboo chairs, which they said were good. My back was turned to them, and so I did not at first see their ill-favoured countenances, nor the looks which, as Henry told me afterwards, they cast on my onyx earrings and rings, which I unfortunately wore that day. Possibly they may have thought them of great value. But I must give you a description of these three villainous-looking men, whom, on turning round, I was surprised to see. One of them was in such rags that his clothes would scarcely hang on him; the second was a most evil-looking man of twenty or less, and the third looked like a ticket-of-leave man. They cast longing eyes at the food, as if they were ravenous. Our coolie ordered them away, but, from his voice, we could see he was much afraid of them. Indeed, he told Henry that he was quite sure they were thieves. The three men then moved a hundred yards or so towards the village, but they stopped and watched us, our coolie shaking with fear as he packed up the forks, spoons, etc., as quickly as he could. We (Henry, Minnie, and I) then ascended the hill, leaving these three wretched-looking men whispering

together below. We were charmed with the exquisite view as we went higher and higher. We could see four or five separate chains of mountains, and pretty valleys, with the river winding its course amongst them. The pagoda we visited is a four storeyed one, but each division of it is so deep that the pagoda is high.

We went on from the pagoda to the brow of the hill and looked down upon the village with its covered market-place, from which, no doubt, the pretty oxen had been driven. Minnie and I gathered charming wild flowers, one of which was a lovely blue in colour, resembling our Forget-me-not, and another was a red clustered flower, having a sweet scent. Having enjoyed the view, we prepared to descend the hill, as we felt that we must soon start on our homeward journey. We had walked on about five minutes, when we heard low voices approaching, and immediately after saw some men stealthily creeping up the side of the hill. To my horror, I recognised the evil-looking fellows who had spoken to us below, and soon saw that these three men had gathered reinforcements. First, three came in sight, then another three, and still lower on the hill was one man alone. From the arrangement of the men, and their stopping immediately upon seeing us, and turning towards us, it was evident that they were

bent upon mischief, and we felt sure that they intended to attack us. Henry said, "You and Minnie go on in front of me, they mean to do us harm." I must confess that my knees trembled under me, and I dreaded going down the steep hill towards these ruffianly-looking fellows. They arranged themselves in order of attack as we passed near them, and one man, the foremost one, had his hands behind his back with something shining in them. I looked and thought it was a knife, but afterwards I came to the conclusion that it was a light-coloured stick, and that the sun shining brightly on it, gave it the appearance of steel. Another of the men held a thick stick in his hand which had a large knob at the end. The young villainous-looking man held a small basket, probably containing stones, which he must have brought from the village, whilst we were ascending the hill, as he had nothing in his hand when we first saw him. Henry having placed himself between us and the robbers, called to us to move slowly on, and not to show fear, but this was an injunction not easy to follow, as I was in terror lest the men should spring upon Henry and stab him in the back. One hears that these Chinese will hesitate at nothing, will risk everything for a few dollars. We walked on, two of the party quaking as, I believe, neither of us had quaked before in

our lives. Henry maintained a firm, dauntless manner, walking leisurely, and helping Minnie and me, as we arrived at the sharpest part of the hill. He kept his hand in his buttoned-up coat, and I believe that these men feared to attack, thinking that he carried fire-arms, as the Chinese have an idea that all foreigners carry weapons. I felt as if seven tigers were watching us, ready to spring upon us. At one moment, one of the men made a shrill scream and pushed one of the others towards Henry. Henry knew that this noise is generally a signal of attack, and said calmly, "They are upon us." I looked towards the boat in an agony of fear, to see whether we might rely upon help from our coolie and the boatmen. But, alas! the broad-shouldered young coolie stood on the bank, his back turned towards us, and the boatmen were in their boat, ready to start if any mischief should befall us. The seven robbers turned their faces towards us as we slowly descended the hill. What prevented their attacking us I cannot say, but, on talking it over afterwards, we came to the conclusion that they had intended to attack us at the top of the hill, out of sight of our boatmen, not having anticipated our speedy return from the hill. They may have counted upon waylaying us in the pagoda. Henry's calm, deliberate, attitude saved us from what, I believe,

would have been certain disaster, as an unarmed man, and two defenceless women could have had no chance against these seven villains. I never shall forget my feeling of relief as we stepped into the boat, and at once pushed off from the shore.

The boatmen, on our reaching the boat, said at once to Henry that we had had a narrow escape from the hands of bad men, that they had expected to see an attack made upon us, feeling assured that the seven men meant mischief, as they saw them creep up the hill. The boatmen went on to say (with how much truth you can imagine) that they had intended to come to our assistance in case of need. As there was a distance of at least ten minutes from the boat to the hill, and they had not moved from their boat when we were in such grievous peril, we felt that their words were not deserving of much credit. Our coolie had evidently turned his back, so, in case of disaster, he might say he had seen nothing of it, knew nothing about it. As we pushed off from the shore, the seven men were standing on the side of the hill, looking like vultures disappointed of their prey. We now started on our homeward journey, our faces being turned towards most charming scenery. It was not, however, so lovely as the view had been up the river, and I must also add, that I did not feel in so happy a state of mind as before, to enjoy

the country scenes through which we returned. The sun too, soon began to show signs of going down, and all became grey. As we neared the village of Wong-Sha, a long narrow boat, without a light showing from any part of her (a bad sign this, as all boats, excepting those containing men of ill-repute, carry lights after sunset), bore down upon us, and as it came alongside of us, we saw that three or four men were in it. It was a snake-boat, and Henry and the boatmen exclaimed simultaneously that they were thankful that we had not met with it in a more remote part of the river. Fortunately we were in a measure protected by our nearness to Wong-Sha. It occurred to us also that these pirates wished to have nothing to do with Europeans, as they sheered off on seeing us. We reached home at half-past eight P.M., very tired and worn out by the fatigues and excitements we had passed through during the day.

LETTER XXXIX.

CANTON, April 10th, 1878.

MY DEAR MOTHER.

THE day before yesterday we went into the city and reinspected many branches of Chinese

industry. I was much interested in my visit to the dye-works, where I saw the process of dyeing cotton cloths, and had it fully explained to me. In the inner division of the factory, several large vats stood filled with blue dye for printing the blue cotton so much used by the Chinese, or with a prune-coloured dye also used for dyeing cotton stuffs. The blue dye is composed of indigo, water, native wine, and lime. The prune dye is produced by tanning bark, which is brought in large quantities from Siam. The process of dyeing these cloths is repeated fourteen times, if the colour is to be a dark blue, but four times only, if the colour is to be a light shade of blue. The cotton cloth is then ready to be calendered. I was much amused in watching the primitive means used by the workmen to moisten the fabric before placing it under the stone rollers which are used by the calenderers. They take mouthfuls of water from the spouts of teapots, and then squirt the water from their mouths over the cloth. It is astonishing how much water these men, by practice, can take into their mouths at one time. The calendering is performed by men standing on large granite stones, which they move up and down by their naked feet, the cotton cloth being placed on wooden rollers underneath these stones. On leaving the dye-works we went on to a tobacco

manufactory. Here we saw women employed in the upper rooms of the factory, in picking the fibres from the tobacco leaves. They worked most rapidly, and did not leave off as they gazed in surprise upon us. Below, men were engaged in spreading the leaves, which had been prepared by the women, on a wooden platform and trampling them under their naked feet. They sprinkled the leaves occasionally with oil, and then threw a red-coloured powder over them to give them a red colour. The tobacco leaves were then gathered together, and pressed by means of flat boards placed under a large wooden beam. This pressure reduces them into the form of large cakes. Workmen were employed in another part of the factory in cutting these compressed leaves into small particles, and others were weighing certain quantities, and making them up into packets. These packets were then placed in ovens, heated by charcoal, for the purpose of being dried. On being removed from the ovens they were ready to be sold wholesale or retail to customers. In passing through Cheung-Lok street, we entered some small shops to inspect specimens of wood-carving. Some which were richly carved were intended for temple decorations or for the ornamentation of private houses. The devices in many instances were very strange. The street

occupied by lapidaries, who are engaged in cutting jadestone, was the next place at which we made a halt. We went into three or four of these workshops, and I was much amused by the cool manner in which Henry took out jadestone thumb-rings, bracelets, or whatever was in the machines, and showed them to me. The workmen laughed and nodded, and, knowing Henry so well from his constant visits to their workshops, they stopped or went on with their work as he directed. The cutting of the large blocks of jadestone is done by means of wire saws, which are made in the form of bows having strings of plaited steel wire. The sawyers stand on each side of the block of jadestone, and pull the wire saw backwards and forwards in a horizontal direction. They drop emery powder mixed with water on the part of the stone they are cutting. When the blocks of jadestone have been divided into pieces, they are handed on to other lapidaries who form them into ornaments by small circular saws. The jadestone varies much in colour, from white to light and dark green. Having watched the lapidaries for some time, we went on to the Ch'uung-Shau-Tsze, a monastery in which the Buddha of longevity is worshipped. He is represented as a very fat, merry-looking old man. Portraits of him are often to be seen in shops where pictures are

sold, and little bronze and porcelain images of him are for sale in the curiosity shops. There is a pretty landscape garden attached to this monastery, and, in a nursery garden belonging to it, we saw large earthenware vessels filled with gold fish. There were square troughs containing many of these brilliant creatures in all stages of growth, from spawn up to the fully-grown fish. This Chinese golden carp has a very long tail divided in the centre, with two drooping fans on each side. Its eyes are peculiarly prominent. It is indigenous to the country. We afterwards inspected some carvings in mother-of-pearl, which were beautifully executed. The carving is deep and rich. This is surprising, as the instruments used by the workmen are of a most primitive kind. We also visited some of the shops where silk-weaving was going on. As you enter the Chow Ch'uung-Tuung street, you hear the sound of shuttles being thrown rapidly from one side of the looms to the other. This street is the very centre of the silk-weaving district of the city of Canton. The loom used for plain weaving differs little from that which is employed in England, but the frames in use here for fancy silks are most dissimilar to those used in England for the same purpose, and are most primitive in form. The draw-boy sits above the frame, and pulls the strings by which he brings

down the warp-thread through which the shuttle has to pass to form the pattern. I saw many beautiful webs of silk being made, and I was struck by some of the colours, which were lovely in shade.

We were now quite close to one of the water streets. I do not remember whether I have described these water lanes to you, in a former letter. They are most curious, and remind all European travellers of the water streets of Venice, only here you have no palaces, but ordinary houses on each side of them. As I stood in an open doorway, looking down one of these water streets, namely that which is called, in Chinese, Sai-Hoi, I could imagine that there must be a great resemblance. The inhabitants of the houses step out of their doors into boats, when they want to go from their homes. A very large water-gate, through which boats pass within and without the walls of the city, stands at the end of this water street. Leaving this place, we went through the street called Chong-Uen-Fong, famous for its beautiful embroidery. We entered into many of the open shops where men and boys were working beautiful patterns on silk or satin in frames. I saw most lovely pieces of embroidery in hand, some of which were intended for large ancestral, or longevity banners, and others as coverings

for altars. In some cases the embroidery was for mandarins' dresses or ladies' tunics. The shading of colours was most charming, and I thought the flowers and butterflies introduced into the patterns were exquisitely worked. The pattern is sketched in white chalk, on the silk or satin before the embroidery is begun. I am much in love with this rich work, and also with the beautiful fringes made by the Chinese. The embroidery varies very much in quality, a fact you do not observe so much at first, but as the eye becomes educated, you can detect the different qualities at once. We paid a most interesting visit to the shop of a gold-beater in this street. In this shop two men were beating out gold into extremely fine sheets. The gold was placed between pieces of black paper, and several of them being so arranged, they were covered over with thick white pasteboard, then placed on a block of unpolished marble. The men who sat on each side of the block proceeded to beat the packets of gold with extremely heavy hammers, and whilst they were so employed streams of perspiration fell from their naked shoulders. I was amused at seeing two boys who stood behind these workmen, and fanned them without ceasing. Some shops in this neighbourhood, in which horn lanterns are made and exposed for sale, much

pleased me. I wish you could see these lanterns, which are manufactured by a singular process, and are made in most varied shapes and sizes. Many of them are beautifully painted, and framed in black carved wood. I cannot tell you all I saw in these interesting streets, but I may mention the work in kingfisher's feathers which we examined, and the beautiful feather fans made from the plumage of many a lovely bird. As fans are such necessary articles for use in this country, the supply is most varied, and the prices asked for them ranges from a few cash to many dollars. The carving in ivory too, by means of very primitive instruments, came under our notice. I saw an elephant's tusk which was being exquisitely carved. It had been some months under the workman's hands, and was still far from completion. It was to be offered for sale at a very high price. We now felt in need of some refreshment, and therefore went into a large tea-saloon. I was very tired with my morning's work, but I had enjoyed it most thoroughly. It was intensely interesting to see the industries which are carried on at the present moment in this country in a precisely similar manner as they were in ages past, and I felt while inspecting them as if I had been removed into centuries long since gone by. And now I must give you a description of the tea-saloon

into which we entered in search of refreshments. It, as is the rule with all these tea-saloons, of which there are very many in Canton, consists of two or three storeys, in each of which small tables are placed with chairs arranged around them. These saloons are very grand, being richly ornamented with carved wood-work, and all the arrangements in them are beautifully clean. In fact they are infinitely superior in all particulars to public-houses in Europe, the place of which they supply in China. There is a furnace in each storey which supplies boiling water for the tea, the only beverage consumed in these saloons. On taking our seats in the upper room, round one of the small tables, a lacquerware box, divided into compartments and containing cakes of various kinds and many preserved fruits, was placed before us; cups of tea, too, were handed to us. You cannot help being struck with the republican spirit which is shown in this conservative country in many particulars. In these saloons rich and poor occupy the same room; a man in silk at one table, a man in cotton clothes at another. In Canton you do not see any Chinese women in these saloons. We much enjoyed our tea-cakes, preserved cherries, ginger, plums, and kum-kwats. When we had finished our repast, we called one of the waiting-men to us, for the purpose

of paying our bill. And now I saw the method they adopt for charging. The waiter took up the lacquerware box, and counted how many cakes and fruits remained in it, he knowing the number of each which it contained previous to its having been placed before us. As we were passing out of the room, this waiter called out the sum we were indebted, to an accountant, who sat behind a little counter at the door. And here we paid a trifling sum, so it seemed to me, for our luncheon. On going downstairs Henry took me into the large kitchen, at the back of the building, where several cooks were occupied in making cakes of different kinds, and from the piles and piles of little cakes just ready for use, one felt how much these places of refreshment must be resorted to by the Chinese. How incalculable would be the advantages to the English people, if similar refreshment-rooms were established in England, where neither wine nor spirits would tempt the poor man to drink away his hardly-earned wages. When we arrived at the door of the tea-saloon, we found the street was much crowded, and, on asking the reason, were told that the procession of Paak-tai was about to pass down the street. We, therefore, took up our station at the door of the tea-saloon to see it go by. As you will be sure to remember my long description of a

similar procession last year, I need not say much about this one, only that it differed in some particulars from the first I had seen. It was not on so large a scale, but the umbrellas, banners, etc., carried in it were new, and consequently very bright. One of its features I had not observed in the procession of last year. Various scenes were represented by children and young people, who were grouped on portable platforms. I saw, in one of these set pieces, a fortune-teller represented, with a lady consulting him. In another two ladies were playing cards. In one group the actors (children) were seated in a boat. A garden scene, with a group of people sitting in it, was prettily arranged. The girls composing some of these groups were immensely rouged, and wore beautifully embroidered silk costumes. The little boys wore beards, or long moustaches, and slanting eyebrows were gummed on to their foreheads.

After the procession had passed, we paid a hurried visit to the Kwoh-Laan, or fruit market.*

* In this market, which is one of great extent, there is for sale, at all seasons of the year, an almost countless variety of fruits. Of the fruits which, at stated times, are here exposed for sale, we may enumerate the orange, citron, pummelo, apple, rose-apple, custard-apple, pine-apple, pear, carambola, quince, guava, loquat, pomegranate, pumpkin, plantain, apricot, peach, plum, persimmon, grape, mango, melon, mulberry, lichi,

There is always a great variety of fruit exposed for sale in this, the Covent Garden of Canton, and I often pass through it to see the fruits, many of which are strange to me.

We had a very enjoyable excursion yesterday, some little way up the Fa-ti creek, our intention in starting being to go to a literary pagoda at Nam-Cheang and to take our afternoon tea at the foot of it. But first we paid, in passing, a visit to two or three of the gardens at Fa-ti. It is always a pleasure to me to stroll through these curious gardens. The first impression of them has naturally worn off, but their singularity strikes me afresh each time I enter them. It would be impossible to bring them as they are before your imagination, as you have seen nothing of the kind in England. I will try, however, to give you a short description of them. In the first place, the Chinese do not grow their flowers in beds, nor let them spread from one to the other as we do. They grow all their flowers in pots. Rows of them line the paths in these gardens, and I have seen lovely shows of them, including roses, cockscombs, camelias, magnolias, chrysanthema, rhododendrons, balsams, azaleas, the narcissus, lotus, etc. As I

wampee, date, luung-ngaan, arbutus, olive, cocoa-nut, walnut, chestnut, water-chestnut, and pea-nut.—*Vide* Archdeacon Gray's 'Walks in the City of Canton.'

have walked up and down these gardens again and again, I have been amused at seeing numbers and numbers of plants trained over wire shapes into various devices, such as deer, serpents, dolphins, pagodas, birds, fans, boats, flower-baskets, and lastly, and by far the most noticeable and numerous, those which are made to represent Englishmen. The latter are most grotesque. The body, down to the knees, is made in a wire shape with the plant trained and cut over it, marking out the outline. A tall hat covers a composition head, which is invariably represented with red hair and whiskers. High black boots are added below the knees, and composition hands holding a stick complete these strange figures. Sometimes earthenware dogs are represented at the heels of these caricatures. Cantonese dogs never follow their masters, they are not trained to do so, but are regarded as watch-dogs only. It therefore strikes the Chinese in this city as most curious to see Europeans followed by their dogs. A stick, too, is not allowed to be used in China, by any man under seventy years of age, and it is then used as a staff. And so again the habit of able-bodied Europeans carrying walking-sticks is very strange to the eyes of the Cantonese. The dwarf-trees, grown in pots, which these gardens contain in great abundance,

are very singular. Some of them, especially the pear-trees, are of great age, and are not more than from one to two feet high. Many have all the appearance of gnarled oaks in miniature. I do not think, however, they are so wonderful as the dwarf-trees which I saw in Japan. The latter appeared to me as possessing more twisted branches, and as being more compressed in form than those to be found in the Fa-ti gardens. We now re-entered our sampan and went on to Nam-Cheang. The literary pagoda, at the foot of which we took our seats, is a graceful structure and charmingly decorated with porcelain frescoes. The tea was brought to us by our coolie from the boat, boiling water was soon got ready over a little fire of sticks, and we sipped our tea and gazed upon the strange country in front of us. Having finished our tea we went into a small and dirty temple dedicated to the gods of learning. Such frightful idols they were, with a hideous attendant in effigy standing on each side of the chief altar. We then took a stroll through the small village, followed, as we usually are when passing through country villages, by boys and girls, the latter being very considerably in the minority. The girls, without exception, wore their hair cut in a fringe across their foreheads, and I knew from this that they were not only unmarried, but

unaffianced. A young Chinese girl wears her back hair in a single plait hanging over her shoulders, the front hair is brought over the forehead, but as soon as she is betrothed, the fringe



UNMARRIED VILLAGE GIRL.

is brushed back and the back hair is dressed à la teapot.

Followed by an admiring throng of village children, we walked on a little way from Nam-Cheang to inspect a large granite arch raised

in honour of Lau-laong-Shee, a woman who attained to the great age of a hundred years, and who in consequence received this posthumous honour. The arch is high, and two figures are carved in relief on it, which represent old age. Characters, engraved on it, purport that it is raised by imperial decree, and give the name of the lady thus honoured. This arch was raised some forty years ago. We were so much vexed the other day, on coming home from one of our excursions, to find that a party of ten Chinese ladies had called upon us. I wish they had given us notice of their intended visit, as I should have liked so much to entertain them, and certainly should have stayed at home to receive them.

LETTER XL.

CANTON, April 12th, 1878.*

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I HASTEN to write to you full particulars of a terrible catastrophe which befell our settlement yesterday, and which has destroyed several

* This letter has been re-written from memory, as the letter written at the time and sent to England describing the whirlwind, was not returned to my family by the friend to whom it was lent for perusal.

hundred houses in the western suburb of the city. I so much fear that you and all those who have relations living at Canton must have had a severe shock when the telegraphic news of the whirlwind and the destruction it has caused reached England. If you remember, in one of my letters written last August, I told you that we had had a terrific wind which caused us much alarm, and which destroyed some houses in the city. The sound accompanying this last whirlwind was precisely similar to that I then described, only very much louder. But before I begin a description of all that happened when the whirlwind broke upon us, I must tell you what singular weather we had had during the earlier part of the day. About eleven o'clock a terrific thunder-storm came on, which was accompanied by the most violent tropical rain. After that had ceased we were surprised by a shower of hail, and the hailstones we picked up from the floor of our verandah were in some cases as large as walnuts, and of the nature of ice. This hail-storm quickly passed off, and the weather partially cleared up. I was in my bedroom after luncheon, at, I believe, about half-past two, when I was attracted towards the window by a curious rushing sound, and on looking out I saw a great cloud of what appeared to be fragments

and débris being driven madly up the river. I concluded that the great steamer 'Powan,' which was due from Hong-Kong at that hour, had blown up. Immediately though I was undeceived, as the wind was upon us, and the banyan trees in front of our house were literally bent to the ground by its force. I rushed downstairs to Henry, whom I had left in the library, and as he came out of the room at the same moment, we met in the hall. He said to me and to Minnie, who had followed me down stairs, "Get under the staircase, a typhoon is upon us, and the house may come down!" He had heard the great rushing noise as he was reading in the library, and also a great amount of firing from the junks on the river, and came to the conclusion that, unlikely as it appeared to be, an attack on the foreign settlement was being made by the Chinese. The full force of the whirlwind came upon the front of our house, and so terrific was it for a few seconds, that it took away our breath, and it seemed impossible that any masonry could withstand the shock. I was looking on the ground for a minute, when my little friend cried out, "Oh, Mrs. Gray, the house is coming down!" How can I convey to your mind any idea of the alarm this exclamation caused me, but on looking up I saw what had given rise to the little girl's fears. The front door, which is a very high one, gaped

wide towards us, and it was only the lock and fastening that prevented it falling inwards. The window above it, which is in the form of a half-circle, fell in, glass, framework, and all, at the same moment. The hall lamp, too, was shattered to atoms. Without experiencing it, you cannot imagine what the fearful pressure of wind is on such an occasion.

I feared for my little ones in their nursery, and tried to rush upstairs, but in vain. I could not open the door of the dining-room, the pressure of wind was so great upon it, for although it was on the sheltered side of the house, the windows were open. I could not go up the front staircase as the glass was falling upon it from the high window. Directly the glass had fallen and I could pass with safety, I ran upstairs, dreading what might have happened, but I found both my little ones asleep in their amahs' arms, happily unconscious of the fearful danger they had been in. The amahs, who were blanched with fear, cried out, "Oh, mississi, how bad you look!" The agony of mind and the tension of fear for the few minutes that the whirlwind beat against our house, had told upon me. Our drawing-room, which was on the exposed side of the house to the whirlwind, as it came up the river, was most providentially closed; I think for the first time since the

warm weather had set in. The coolie, whose duty it was to open the windows and typhoon shutters, had left very early that morning to go into the country to worship the tombs of his ancestors. The other coolie had neglected to unfasten the windows and blinds, so the room was really barricaded against the wind.

In the meantime, the shrieks and screams which proceeded from the river were most distressing to hear, and we felt sure that terrible destruction was taking place amongst the boat population. When we had sufficiently recovered, and felt that the danger as concerned ourselves had passed, we went on to our verandah, and then stepped on to the Bund. I shall never forget the scene that now presented itself to our view. A quarter of an hour before the whirlwind arose I had looked out from this verandah to see what was the matter, as a great noise was made by some of the boat people. An accident had taken place; a small boat having been run down by a junk. As I stood there, I noticed how full the river was of craft; on the right-hand side there was a crowd of small boats, in front a large English steamer at anchor, surrounded by lighters discharging their cargo into her; a little to the left were two small yachts at anchor, and numerous boats were plying about the river—and now, when I looked again,

all was changed: the small boats were keel upwards, and the unfortunate boatmen were, I saw, crawling from underneath them on to the keels; one yacht had disappeared, the other still rode at anchor, but her mast lay alongside of her in the river. The steamer alone remained uninjured, but the captain afterwards told us that had the wind struck her midship she would have turned over. Most fortunately the tide was changing at the moment, and she was in the act of turning round, so was struck on the stern by the whirlwind. The lighters suffered fearfully; they were all keel upwards, and the poor human beings belonging to them, at least those who had not perished, were clinging to the keels. The sound made by these boats crushing against and breaking each other up was most sad to hear. And now began the wailing of those who were already recovering the dead bodies of their dear ones. A fine boy of about nine years old was taken out of the water quite close to the Chaplaincy. The poor father came towards us with his dead child in his arms, his body bent in an agony of grief, and calling upon his son by endearing names to come back to him. The mother joined him, and added her wail of agony to his, and tore her hair in her despair. The father now held the boy by the heels, the head hanging down, in the curious belief that the water would thus flow-

from the mouth. He then placed the body on some bricks which the mother had set in order for that purpose, and put his foot on the chest of the boy to press the water out of the body, but it was all of no avail, the boy was dead. Immediately after this I saw five or six dead children laid side by side on the Bund. The creek at the back of our house was simply a scene of wailing and desolation. Hundreds of boats were floating keel upwards, and it seemed wonderful how some of the large craft had been able to turn over in so small a space. The bridge which spans the creek was much injured, and by the time we reached it, half an hour after the whirlwind had passed, it was crowded by hundreds of Chinese. It seemed as if another catastrophe might take place, by the damaged bridge giving way under the great pressure brought to bear upon it. The scene on the pathway between the river and the houses was most distressing. I saw the American and Chinese doctors busy attending to and binding up the wounds of those who had been injured by the falling houses. The silk rooms belonging to Messrs. Siemssen & Co. had simply collapsed, and some Chinese had suffered bruises and cuts in the fall. The police station was a wreck. On the opposite side of the creek, in the Chinese suburb, we saw the pathway of the hurricane

traced in the fallen houses. They had simply become a heap of ruins; and now, as we walked on to the centre green walk of Shameen, we saw the devastation that had been committed on the settlement in those short eleven minutes, during which it is computed the hurricane raged over it. It had swept across the centre of the settlement in that corkscrew movement peculiar to whirlwinds. You could see by the banyan trees, which were torn up by the roots, where the fearful wind had first struck, and the houses immediately in its path looked very wrecks.

The sides of several of them were blown down. The silk warehouse belonging to Messrs. Arnhold, Karberg, & Co. had fallen as a house made of cards by children falls to pieces, and thirteen Chinese were buried in its ruins. They were taking out the men (twelve of these men were dead when discovered) as we passed by the warehouse. And now the Europeans began to collect, and there was a look of evident relief as friend met friend, and a feeling of thankfulness was in every heart, as it became apparent that not an European was missing, not one injured. It is difficult to convey to you an idea of the devastation that reigned in our settlement. The branches of the trees were strewn about in all directions. One tree was a perfect marvel to everybody. It was one of the largest we

had, but every bough had now been stripped off it, and by the rotatory movement of the wind had been piled up on the top of the trunk. An iron lamp-post in front of Messrs. Coare, Lind & Co.'s house, was bent double, and twisted like a corkscrew, and yet the strange caprice of the wind showed itself by leaving their house comparatively uninjured. Just a few slates were, I believe, blown off the roof. The question was, What now is to become of those whose houses have been rendered uninhabitable? Where can they stay? They were eventually divided amongst those whose houses had escaped or comparatively escaped from harm. The houses most injured were those of Messrs. Jardine, Matheson & Co., A. Gepp & Co., William Pustau & Co. and Arnold, Karberg & Co. We heard to-day that the lady living at Messrs. Jardine, Matheson & Co.'s house had a narrow escape with her children. They were in one of the upper rooms, when the whirlwind came upon the house in its full fury, and before they had reached the door, the side of the house, in which the room is situated fell down. They then took refuge in the corner of the upper landing, and from there saw the furniture driven from its position and flying about in all directions. A large screen standing by the staircase was lifted up and thrown over

the stairs. In the drawing-room the furniture was simply wrecked, the top of the grand piano was taken off, all the ornaments were scattered about, and most of them broken. Below, a marble slab was lifted from a table and blown to the other end of a long hall. And yet all the inhabitants of this house escaped without a scratch! The wind entered by the hall door, which was open, and corkscrewed up the house, rendering it uninhabitable. We returned home sore at heart at all the sufferings we had seen. We heard that a Chinese merchant, who was walking down the centre road of Shameen, was killed by a falling brick-bat. We were also told that one of the ladies who had left the British Consulate, but had returned to fetch something from her room, had only just reached the door when a large piece of the roof fell through into the room. No one had had an idea that the roof was injured. Before I left home, I had noticed a most characteristic feature in some Chinese carpenters in our own house. We had a few days before this seen a beautifully-carved, black, hard-wood Chinese bedstead in one of the furniture shops, but it was then in various pieces. We said we should like to have the bedstead sent us, and put together at our house, so that we could decide if we would purchase it or not. It was accordingly brought to our house

yesterday morning, and the carpenters set to work to fasten the pieces together, and they were still so employed when the whirlwind began. They left off for a minute or two, standing close to the bedstead, which they had placed in the upper hall. As soon as the fearful rush of wind was over, they re-commenced their work, not even looking out of the window to see what had happened, not asking a question, nor was their serenity apparently disturbed by the heart-rending shrieks and the combined wailing of the sufferers immediately around them. The poor people in the boats, at least those on the wide river, might have tried to save themselves when the first sounds of the whirlwind were heard. In their foolish belief, however, that the mischief was caused by the dragon of the river twisting himself and lashing his tail, the men took out their guns, and fired them off incessantly for the few seconds' reprieve, before the force of the wind reached them, in order to frighten the dragon away from their boats. It was this firing that led Henry to suppose at first that an attack was being made on the foreign settlement by the Chinese. And now came the alarm, namely the loud beating of gongs, to announce that fire had broken out in the city, and on looking we saw the heavens red in two distinct places. The crowd of human beings in the

Chinese street across the creek was immense. The great gaps, with the heaps of fallen rubbish marked the path of the whirlwind, and now the horror of fire was added to the scene. Before it became dark, we had a notice sent to us, which went the round of all the European houses, to say that the Chinese Viceroy had sent a detachment of soldiers, under the command of a military mandarin, to protect the foreign community. The lamentations and wailings continued all through the night at intervals, but nothing occurred to cause us fresh alarm on the settlement. We have walked round it this morning, and a sad scene it presents. Any one coming to it as a stranger would imagine that the place had been bombarded. A tree broken off close to its roots was thrown over our neighbour's wall, which was much injured. Trees immediately opposite our door have been torn out by the roots from the chunam pavement, and lie on the ground. We have heard of many sad casualties. The Chinese tailor who worked for us was, with two or three others, killed by the falling of his house just across the creek. No one can estimate the number of lives lost yesterday; they say it is some thousands, in fact it is feared that from six to ten thousand have perished.

LETTER XLI.

CANTON, April 17th, 1878.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

LAST Saturday, and again on the following Monday, Henry and I went into the western suburb, to see for ourselves how far the reports we had heard of the fearful destruction caused by the whirlwind were true. On starting in our sampan, we were conscious at once of a most disagreeable odour arising from the water, and as we pursued our way to the site of the old factories, the smell became more and more offensive, and we felt sure, from its intensity, that some dead bodies must be floating around and about us. I dreaded to look, fearing to see some revolting spectacle. When we entered the western suburb of the city, we noticed that the Chinamen, who were walking about, held pieces of sandal-wood to their noses, or held the ends of their tails under their nostrils. In all the shops of the western suburb sweet-smelling incense was burning. At first we thought that the account given us of the devastation caused by the whirlwind had been exaggerated, but as we went on farther and found ourselves in the path that it took, we began to

realise the extent of the disaster. As we stood up on the bridge leading from the street called Shap-Ts'at Poo, a sad spectacle presented itself to our eyes. The creek was no longer a flowing stream, but was literally choked up by the débris of the fallen houses. As we went along, we were much struck by the peculiarly sharp line drawn by the whirlwind, for on one side of a very narrow street the houses stood uninjured, and on the other the houses were simply a mass of rubbish, or, if standing, were rendered uninhabitable. In one part of the western suburb we stood with fallen streets around us, just a chaotic mass of bricks and rubbish. On inquiring from men in this immediate neighbourhood, Henry became convinced of what he had previously conjectured, that the loss of human life was not so great as at first computed. In one long street, where all the houses were down, a man told Henry that only eleven persons had been killed. It is certain that the Chinese houses, being built of much lighter material and without the solidity of an European house, do not bring the same wholesale destruction upon their inhabitants when they fall. We then went on to see two large temples which have been shaken to their foundations by the whirlwind. The one is the Tien-Hau-Miu, the other, which immediately joins it, is the Mi-Chau-Miu. At first

we were inclined to think they were not utterly ruined, but, on examining them more closely, we found that every pillar that was still standing was shaken and cracked ; the roofs were broken in, the porcelain frescoes most dilapidated, and a mass of bricks and rubble lay on the floor. The only parts that had escaped in either of the temples were, curiously enough, the two high altars ; and the goddess in one, and the god in the other, with their respective attendants, still maintained their positions, although they were much disfigured by the dust. On returning towards home, we went into a street close to Shameen, and here a very sad sight came before our eyes. We saw several plain wooden coffins at the side of this street, with men of the pariah class sitting by them, and waiting for corpses which were being dug out of the ruins of the fallen houses. We entered one of the native merchants' hong, and saw two of the assistants sitting near the entrance, with a jar containing burning incense before them. This was a most necessary precaution, as the offensive odour in the shop was overpowering, and the merchants told us that one or two corpses had been already removed from the ruins in the rear of their hong. In our walk of a mile from the landing-stage, and in making the circuit of the district which had suffered in the late catastrophe, we saw

desolation and ruin. Henry thinks, however, from all he has learnt, that the loss of human life caused by the whirlwind does not probably exceed five thousand. The Chinese benevolent society, the Yeuk-Hong, or Chinese dispensary at Shap-Ts'at Poo, gave four thousand coffins for the interment of those who had perished. The Shun-kum (or Chinese gentry) have done much to alleviate the sufferings of persons who have sustained injuries from the falling of their dwellings. They have erected mat sheds in the quadrangles of several of the temples, in which native doctors are stationed to dress the wounds of the sufferers, and to give them advice and medicines. During our walk we entered two or three of these temporary dispensaries, and saw many seriously injured people receiving medical care, for which they seemed most grateful.

LETTER XLII.

CANTON, April 22nd, 1878.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

HENRY learnt from one of his Chinese friends that a very grand funeral was to take place in the western suburb, and that it was to be one of unusual display, as the deceased man had held

the high position of viceroy of two of the midland provinces of China. We started early in the morning, leaving home before six o'clock, and walked on to the street called Taai-Luuk-Poo, to a house belonging to the family Loo, of which the deceased man was a member. He had died seven weeks before, at the ripe age of ninety-six years. A large crowd had assembled in the street and around the door of the house of mourning, but they immediately made way for us to pass through. In the porch we were received most courteously by the attendants and invited to go into the house. We now passed into the inner hall, in which the large coffin was placed behind a screen under the ancestral altar. Four sons of the deceased came forward, bowed themselves to the ground, and did the kau-tau at our feet, in acknowledgment of our visit of condolence. These men wore long sackcloth dresses and low-crowned caps also made in sackcloth, from which hung little cotton balls suspended on threads of cotton. These caps gave a very singular appearance to their wearers. The sons of the deceased then handed us cups of tea, and the conductor of ceremonies gave each of us a little present of lucky money, half a dollar in value, wrapped up in white paper. A similar present of money is given at all Chinese funerals to the friends who are present, but it

varies in value according to the rank or fortune of the deceased person. Boiled rice was also presented to us, but we did not eat it, as it was regarded as an offering from the spirit of the deceased. This rice is boiled the night before by the sons of the family, attired in sackcloth, who cook it in the court-yard of the house, themselves adding fuel to the fire as required. When this rice is boiled it is called "old man's rice," and is offered to the spirit of the departed one. This custom is observed only when the deceased person has died full of years. On the day of the funeral this rice is divided amongst the guests. The ladies of the family were screened from our view by the altar, and the surroundings of the coffin, but we could see the edges of their sackcloth garments, and occasionally we caught a glimpse of some of them either sitting or kneeling on the ground. At this moment a passage was made through the crowd of friends and retainers, and a mandarin of high rank, in full dress, wearing a peacock's feather in his hat, advanced, prostrated himself before the altar, and worshipped the spirit of the deceased. The master of ceremonies regulated the worship as the mandarin knelt and did the kau-tau. A picture of the deceased, well painted, hung over the altar. Very many long embroidered banners in bright and varied colours,

containing words of sympathy, adorned the walls of the outer and inner halls. On the withdrawal of the mandarin, eight Buddhist priests advanced into the inner hall and took up their positions, four on each side of the altar, on which stood a tablet bearing the name of the deceased, and offerings of food, fruit, flowers, and a cup of tea. Chopsticks were also placed on the altar. The priests, one of them beating a tom-tom and leading the chanting of the prayers, informed the spirit of the departed that they were about to remove his body to the tomb prepared for it, begging the spirit to be so good as to accompany it without causing trouble to the family. The Chinese entertain great fears that the soul of a dead man may not wish to leave the house on the day appointed for the funeral, and they strive to cajole it to do so. After the Buddhist priests had retired, eight Tauist priests came into the hall and rendered a similar act of worship to the spirit of the deceased.

After these ceremonies were over, the howling for the dead commenced on the part of the mourning women, and the chief mourners, the four sons of the deceased. The time having now arrived for the coffin to be removed from the house, a curious scene occurred. All the members of the family, attendants, etc., fled from the hall in all directions,

as the Ng-tsok (a pariah class whose duty it is to carry corpses to the grave) were in the act of raising the coffin on their shoulders. This panic arose from dread lest the soothsayer whom they had consulted should have failed in choosing a lucky day for the burial of the deceased, in which case his spirit would be so angry as to desire to afflict any members of the family, who were present at that moment, with some griveous sickness.

We now left the house, as we wished to obtain a good position in the street through which the funeral procession was to pass. All forms and ceremonies observed at a Chinese funeral are strictly in accordance with the rank and position of the dead person, and in this case the arrangements were on a most unusually grand scale. We walked down the street some little way, and then entered a shop at the invitation of its owner, who at once recognised Henry as an old friend. It was fortunate we did so, as there was a long delay before the procession started from the house of mourning. Our kind friend gave us seats, and on hearing we should like to take tea, he made some for us. Henry as usual whiled away the time by entering into conversation with all around him. We noticed that the head assistant in the shop looked very sad and remained silent, and when the conversation turned on the subject

of the late whirlwind, he looked still sadder. The master of the shop told Henry that the young man's wife had perished in a house close by, which had been blown down by the whirlwind. At last musical sounds and beating of gongs announced that the funeral procession had started from the house of mourning, and our host kindly placed at his door a long form upon which we stood, and so were enabled to look over the heads of the assembled crowd. The first thing that appeared in sight after two gong bearers, was a long bamboo catafalque, which was intended to be placed over the coffin at the tomb. It was trimmed with bright-coloured fringe and narrow ribbons. Following it were two men who carried large lanterns with the name and title of the deceased painted on them. Then came sixteen young musicians, and after them boys bearing flags and paper lanterns on red poles. Men carrying red boards bearing the names and titles of the deceased and his ancestors, also others bearing insignia in various forms, such as battle-axes, sceptres, hands, etc., now passed before us. The Buddhist priests, who had worshipped in the house, walked by two and two abreast. Equerries on ponies were added to the procession, in consequence of the high rank of the deceased. Eight of these equerries passed now

and eight others nearer the end of the procession. After the eight equerries, the Tauist priests walked past, two and two abreast, preceded and followed by men carrying tables surmounted by canopies, trimmed wholly in yellow silk, a privilege accorded only by the Emperor to men of distinction. These tables, swung on poles, held offerings of pigs, ducks, fowls, fruit and flowers. On another table I saw the official dress, hat, and silk boots of the deceased. A large red umbrella was carried in the procession, besides other bright silk umbrellas. Many friends of the bereaved family walked by, two and two, dressed either in long silk robes, or, if related to the family, in long white cotton coats. A number of soldiers formed part of the procession, in honour of the deceased viceroy. Then came other bands of music, followed by large paper effigies of gods, attendants, etc. And now passed in front of us the chief mourners in their sackcloth dresses, each supported on both sides by attendants, their backs bowed down as if for very grief they could not stand upright. Their eyes and noses were streaming, and the cotton bobs hanging from their sackcloth hats dangled in front of their faces, and gave them a really comical effect. The eldest son carried a wooden staff in his hand, round which were twined strips of white cotton.

In the other hand he bore a bamboo pole with a streamer at the end of it, called the soul-cloth, which is supposed to summon the spirit of the deceased to accompany the body it so recently animated. From where we stood, we could hear the loud wailing of the women who accompanied the coffin for a short distance from the house of mourning. Behind the chief mourners came the second eight equerries, and following them again appeared sixty-four men, who were clad entirely in white, and who paced slowly along, two and two. In their hands, passing from the first to the last and fastened to the coffin, were wide bands of white calico ornamented with huge rosettes made in the same white material. It is supposed (and here one sees another evidence of the original intention having become a sham ceremonial only) that these men are drawing the coffin to its last resting-place. The fact really is, that they have not a particle of weight of the burden laid upon them. The huge coffin now came in sight, and we saw that it was covered over by a richly ornamented red pall embroidered in gold thread with patterns of dragons worked on it. Along the top of the coffin was an immensely long pole, red in colour, and much ornamented. At one end of this pole a dragon's head was represented in green and gold, and at the other

end was the tail of the dragon equally gilded and decorated.

This dragon pole can be placed only above the coffin of a man who has attained the high rank of a viceroy. One feature of the procession which I find I have omitted, was the state chair, used by the deceased when living. It now contained his portrait, which had been placed on the seat by his sons just before they had left the house of mourning. The lamps were alight inside the chair, and all was arranged as if the great man himself were seated in his chair, instead of being a lifeless corpse borne along upon the shoulders of some dozens of the Ng-tsok or carriers of the dead. The prescribed number of chair bearers, in accordance with the high rank of the deceased, carried the state chair, and the orthodox number of attendants accompanied it. The stage on which the huge coffin rested had a most complicated arrangement of rope about it, by which the Ng-tsok supported the coffin. Paper money was scattered along the streets to appease the hungry ghosts of paupers, who, having died in the streets, have not received the usual offering of food and money from their descendants. The procession closed with some led ponies belonging to the sons of the deceased man, and by groups of attendants and friends. We had seen

the high official, in whose honour this long procession was made, only some two or three weeks before his death, when we were visiting one of the temples, and a Chinese who was present told Henry of his high rank, and said that only he and one other citizen of Canton were living who had attained to the rank of viceroy. No man is ever appointed to this high office in the province of which he is a native.

Another strict rule is that when a viceroy is appointed to a province, the relations of his wives may not accompany him. The American Consul's wife told me, a few days ago, a touching anecdote about the present viceroy of Canton. He had a favourite wife, one he dearly loved, and, as he himself told the consul, it was she who always superintended his toilet. He said he always went to her, before leaving his yamun on state occasions, to ask for her opinion as to his personal appearance. This wife, on coming to Canton, much missed her family, from whom she had been separated for the first time. She entreated her husband to allow her to send for them, but he told her that it was not possible for him to comply with her request. She urged him again and again with tears to allow her family to come to her, but the viceroy had it not in his power to gratify her wish. Just before we arrived at Canton, in March of last

year, the poor woman, not being able to bear the refusal of her wishes, took opium whilst her husband was away from home, and on his return he found her dying. In an agony of grief he sent for the Missionary Doctor, and offered him any sum of money, if he could restore his beloved wife, but it was too late, and she died a few minutes after the doctor arrived. The viceroy is in great distress at having no children ; he has married three wives, but is still childless. He consulted some geomancers on the subject, and they advised him to build a pagoda in the grounds of his yamun, promising him a son when it was completed. The pagoda was raised, but the viceroy's desire was not gratified, and, on asking the geomancers for the cause, they said they had ascertained that the pagoda had been placed on an unlucky spot of ground, that it must be taken down, and rebuilt in another part of the garden. This pagoda is now in course of reconstruction.

LETTER XLIII.

CANTON, April 29th, 1878.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

WE have endeavoured several times to go up a tidal creek which intersects the island of

Honam, and to make a circuit, returning home by the broad river, but we have been again and again foiled in our attempts, owing to the lowness of the tides. We made up our minds to make another effort last week, and started towards the end of the one tide, to catch the fair tide on the broad river, as we knew if we failed in this it would make the excursion so long that we could not possibly arrive home until night had set in. We started about half-past two P.M., and, going some little way up the creek, stopped about four o'clock at a little Buddhist monastery standing on the left bank. 'We went in to see it, whilst our boy made tea ready for us. I was much struck, on entering the shrine, to see a monk properly vested kneeling before an altar, and unassisted, reciting the vesper service in a monotone. He was earnest in manner, not disturbed by our appearance, but seemed to be simply engaged in a daily duty. No one else was present, and not a soul apparently would have known if he had not fulfilled his duty. After we had enjoyed our tea *al fresco*, we re-entered our sampan, passing by most picturesque villages, and under bridges so quaint and charming that I longed to sketch them. The tide again unfortunately played us false, but this time we had entered the broad river before it turned against

us. We then made way very slowly, for the adverse tide was very strong, and darkness fell upon us when we were still three or four miles from Shameen. We toiled along by the opposite bank of the river, and had nearly reached Honam, when a black darkness overpowered us, and shut out all from our view. It was evident that a heavy storm was at hand. We heard the busy talk, in a high key, of the boat people in the boats around us, who were evidently seized with fear at the approach of the storm. I felt terrified, for I knew we had to cross the wide river, a dangerous matter in such Egyptian darkness; and yet we could not reach home without doing so. We already began to strike against, and be struck by, other boats, and as crafts without lights were coming in all directions, without any rule of way on the river, it seemed as if we must meet with some serious accident. When we turned our boat's head to cross the river, it was a most alarming moment. Boats were coming to the right of us, to the left of us, behind us, in our path, and others were anchored in the river. We could only take our chance and strike across to Shameen. The occasional vivid flashes of lightning seemed only to make the intense darkness more fearful than before. When we were nearing the old factories' site, we

heard a great tumult going on ; boats were crashing against each other, men and women were screaming loudly, and it was evident that some accident had happened near to the spot. How we escaped without disaster I cannot tell. Every now and then we had such a blow from some boat much larger than our sampan, that we were fairly sent reeling. I cannot tell you how thankful I felt when I heard that we were under the shelter of Shameen wall, and never was I better pleased to land than on that night. Our servants at home had become much alarmed about us, as they knew the danger we must have run in the thick darkness of the impending storm. Immediately after we had reached home, the storm burst upon us in all its fury. It was terrific. The thunder shook our house, the lightning illuminated the rooms, and the rain came down in torrents. After a while there was a pause in the tempest, but it lasted only a short time, when the storm was renewed in all its fury. Later on, a second lull took place, and then for a third time the thunder shook our house, and seemed to deafen us with its uproar. The calm did not come on until morning dawned. And now I must tell you about an early excursion which we made into the city yesterday morning, to the governor's yamun, to see a most singular cere-

mony. At this time, annually, the Emperor makes a gift to all convicts, male and female, confined in prison, awaiting execution under the imperial warrant. This is supposed to exhibit the clemency of the paternal government. We arrived early at the yamun, but already a dense crowd had assembled in the large quadrangle, and the prisoners were present. They were dressed in new red prison dresses, and had chains round their necks, the ends of which were held by jailors. We found that we had still a long time to wait before the Viceroy and five of the chief officials were expected to arrive, so we looked round for a shelter from the sun, and also from the crowd. We at last asked permission to enter a tower in the outer quadrangle of the yamun, and this request being accorded, we ascended into the smallest, dirtiest, and hottest little room in which I ever sat. On inquiry, Henry discovered that it belonged to the governor's bandsmen. During the next hour I amused myself by looking out of the window and watching the crowd.

It was a strange, a motley group upon which we gazed. Companies of soldiers were there with their spears, matchlocks, and gay banners; small stalls, at which light refreshments were sold, stood at frequent intervals, and the men holding them

seemed to ply a busy trade. Mandarin of various grades continued to arrive. One scene we saw amused us much. A state chair was advancing slowly along a road to the right hand, another quietly along a road to the left. When, however, the rival chair bearers came in sight of each other, they broke into a run, so that neither chair should arrive at the path leading through the outer quadrangle of the yamun before the other. Having accomplished this, and reaching the opening into the path at the same moment, the chair bearers carried their respective masters into the inner quadrangle side by side, neither of the mandarins thus taking precedence of the other. They were equal in rank. At last, from the sounding of gongs and the shrill blast of musical instruments, we knew that the Viceroy was at hand. The soldiers stood at arms under their banners, in two lines, and the great man passed between them up the outer quadrangle. After he had arrived, the prisoners were taken into the inner quadrangle, accompanied by a strong guard. One, who was too weak (or what was quite possible, too much injured by torture) to walk, was carried up the centre path in a basket. When all had passed in, we went down from our unpleasant but friendly shelter and entered the inner quadrangle of the yamun. We then went

into the governor's judgment hall, and saw two red covered tables at the end, and two similar tables on each side of the hall. The Viceroy and the governor now entered, followed by the provincial treasurer, the commissioner of customs, the literary chancellor, and the chief justice. The Viceroy and the governor took their seats at the tables placed at the upper end of the hall, and the other four officials arranged themselves at the side tables. Lesser mandarins and the usual crowd of attendants stood behind each table. The people who were present occupied the sides of the centre path of the quadrangle. And now there was a movement behind us, and on looking round I saw that the prisoners were being led up by jailors in charge of them. They were brought to a stand-still at the wide open entrance of the judgment hall, and about ten at a time were made to kneel in a row, each prisoner being led to his position by his jailor.

A sad sight were these unhappy prisoners, who looked half-starved, dirty, and utterly woe-begone. Their heads were unshaven, and their front hair and pig-tails were rough and entangled. These poor wretches awoke my sympathy, from the cruelties which had been used towards them, and my blood ran cold as I thought of the fate awaiting them. The jailors behaved with

wanton cruelty towards them, jerking them by their chains to make them raise their heads. The class of jailors in China is the worst possible. They take a large share if not all the money provided by the friends of the prisoners, and towards those who have no friends to help them they exercise the most barbarous cruelty. It is more than probable that they, and not the unhappy prisoners, received the benefit of the Emperor's bounty shown on this day. And now as the prisoners kneel down with the greatest difficulty, their limbs being cramped and nearly useless, their names are called over, and two small mandarins advance towards them and place in the hands of each large palm fans. I notice with how much difficulty these prisoners hold them, as their wrists are chained together. Into the palm-leaf fan one of the mandarins drops a little loaf, the other mandarin following him places some money on it, and bending down he throws a string of cash round the neck of each of the kneeling criminals. A rain cloak, large and circular in form, made of dried palm leaves, is then given to each jailor for the use of his particular charge. The prisoners perform the kau-tau and mutter words of thanks to the Emperor for the presents just received; and now with a jerk of the chains the jailors encourage

their miserable protégés to rise, and lead them to the farther end of the quadrangle.

Amongst the third and last set of prisoners who were placed in rows to receive the royal bounty, was a most ill-favoured looking woman, and, on inquiring, Henry learnt that the crime of which she had been convicted was the murder of her mistress's child out of revenge. The fate reserved for this woman is appalling to contemplate. She will suffer the ling-chee form of punishment, that is, she will be bound to a cross and be cut into pieces, the *coup de grâce* not being given, in all probability, until fourteen cuts have been inflicted. One of the most terrible features of Chinese criminal law is this, that a prisoner, when condemned to death for some heinous crime, such as parricide, matricide, fratricide, the murder of a husband, or the murder of a schoolmaster, etc., is not executed within a given period of time. The imperial sanction must be obtained, that is, the Emperor's vermilion pencil-mark must be affixed to the names of criminals who have been guilty of such crimes, before they can be put to death.* Sometimes a prisoner of these classes escapes execution

* Pirates, burglars, highway robbers, and other such criminals are executed under the warrants of viceroys or governors of provinces, as the case may be.

for some years, as the Emperor's vermilion pencil-mark has not been placed against his particular name, and then he is only informed on the morning of the day in which his execution is to take place that his turn has come. I have learnt that one of my amahs is now in mourning for her husband, who has been recently strangled on a cross, on the execution-ground of this city, after eleven years' imprisonment. He exclaimed, when bound to the cross, that he thought it was very hard that, after eleven years' incarceration, he should have to suffer a violent death. This unfortunate man was half an hour under the executioner's hands. The crime for which he suffered was that of kidnapping young children. One wonders how a man's brain can stand the pressure of daily expectation and uncertainty regarding his sentence being carried out. Possibly some of those whom we saw, yesterday, receiving the imperial presents at the yamun were on the eve of being executed, and I could not help thinking that the royal bounty was a great farce. When the ceremony had been brought to a close, I observed that the prisoners were marched back to prison under a strong escort.

LETTER XLIV.

CANTON, May 4th, 1878.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

SOME few days ago we received a large red card of invitation from the abbot elect of the Hai-Chwang-Tsze, or Ocean Banner Monastery at Honam, asking us to be present at his consecration.* It was, as you can imagine, an opportunity not to be neglected, and one of which we most gladly availed ourselves. The ceremony of consecration was to take place very early in the morning. We therefore ordered our servants to have a sampan in readiness at our landing-steps at two A.M., and to call us some short time before that hour. We rose at half-past one, dressed ourselves, and stealthily creeping by our children's door so as not to wake them at that unseasonable hour, we went downstairs, and passed out on to the Bund. Imagine our annoyance when we found no boat ready for us. Our comradore told us a doubtful tale about two of our servants having gone far to find a boat, and not having yet suc-

* I have been obliged to use the Christian terms altar, abbot, monk, priest, chaplain, consecration, mattins, vespers, &c., in describing pagan ceremonies, as no other words convey the meaning of the Chinese terms.

ceeded in their endeavours. The fact was, the order had been wholly forgotten. After remaining a short time near the landing-steps, and not seeing anything of either of our servants or a boat approaching us, we began to despair of crossing the river in time to arrive at the monastery for the ceremony. We perceived a dirty-looking boat at a short distance from the Bund, containing one old man only. Henry hailed him and after much persuasion induced him to paddle his boat near to us, and to listen to our entreaties to take us across the river to Honam. The old man paddled us along very slowly, but we reached the landing-steps in front of the Honam monastery at last. Here we saw several private hong boats, which were lighted up by large paper lanterns. They contained many Chinese gentlemen, who, like ourselves, had come to witness the ceremony of consecration. The scene here was most picturesque, and so indeed was the scene on the river, its craft and banks dimly visible in the light of a new moon. We walked on to the monastery, and found its cloisters illuminated by many coloured lanterns each different in design. The effect of these cloisters at this early hour with their "dim religious light" was most impressive, and one could well imagine oneself in the cloisters of a Catholic monastery in Europe.

On arriving at the visitors' hall we were invited into one of the reception rooms, and when we had taken seats, tea was handed to us. We found several Chinese gentlemen assembled in this room, who were smoking long pipes, sipping tea, and chatting with each other. In a short time we were asked to proceed to the chapter-house, where we met the abbot elect surrounded by a number of his friends. He was then wearing a purple robe. In the cloister adjoining the chapter-house I saw a band composed of small boys in handsomely embroidered coats. A band-master was assembling them, and directing their movements. A large number of monks belonging to the monastery were congregated in the cloister. The abbot elect now rose from the chair in which he had been chatting with his friends, and a long red silk vestment, made in many pieces to represent the robe of poverty, was placed over his shoulders. The procession was then formed to conduct the abbot elect to the various shrines of the monastery. First came the band of small boys playing upon flutes, fifes, and shrill pipes (the latter exactly resembling in sound Scotch bagpipes); then came monks walking two abreast, wearing grey cowls, and yellow silk vestments thrown across the left shoulder; these monks were followed by men bearing large globular

Chinese lanterns on which the name, taken by the abbot upon embracing monastic life, was painted in large characters. The procession was closed by two young priests (really chaplains to the abbot), one of whom carried a crozier in his right hand, and in the other a small tray, on which the abbot's rosary, consisting of plain polished black beads, was laid when he was engaged in prayer. The second young priest held the abbot's rod of office in one hand, and in the other a tray on which was placed a china vase with a small branch of the flowering pear, and a folded letter containing the rules of the monastery. These young priests immediately preceded the abbot elect, who was short and fat, and looked an old man of seventy years or more. We followed close behind him, and were thus able to see the details of the ceremonies which took place. I cannot convey to you an idea of the strange and solemn *coup d'œil* the procession made, as it wound its way slowly down the long and dimly-lighted cloisters. The first halt it made was at a shrine to the left of the large quadrangle, dedicated to the god Wei-to. Here the abbot elect prostrated himself before an altar and performed the kau-tau, a salvo of fire-crackers being let off as he rose from his knees. He then, headed by the procession, crossed over to a shrine at the right-hand side of

the quadrangle, dedicated to Kwan-tai, the god of war, and worshipped at his altar. Kwan-tai and Wei-to are regarded as the guardians of monastic institutions. The procession afterwards passed into the large shrine called Tai-Hung-Poo-Tien, which contains colossal gilded figures of the three Buddhas. The three large altars in this shrine were covered with offerings of fruit and flowers. The abbot elect stood before the centre altar, and one of his chaplains unfolded a square of silk which he carried over his arm, and which I now discovered to be a kneeling-mat. A band of red silk, sewn on to the white silk ground of this mat, looked strangely like an ecclesiastical device. Before the abbot elect knelt, he removed the rosary from his neck, and handing it to the chaplain by his side, it was placed on the tray. He and his two chaplains now knelt before the altar, and one of the latter lighting a joss-stick passed it to the abbot elect, who elevated it three times, and then gave it to his second chaplain to place in the incense-burner standing upon the altar. This was done three times, a new joss-stick being lighted and placed in the incense-burner, on each occasion, with the utmost solemnity, and in silence. The letter was now taken from the tray, unfolded and handed to the abbot elect by the one chaplain, read aloud by

the old man as he knelt before the altar, then passed on to the second chaplain, who re-folded it, and replaced it on the tray. The kau-tau having been performed by the abbot elect, the three rose from their knees, the rosary was replaced round the neck of the abbot elect by the one chaplain, the prayer mat was folded up by the other, and the procession left the shrine. It proceeded then to a shrine containing large images of three abbots who founded this monastery and were the first to preside over it. Before these idols a very long altar had been placed which was overflowing with offerings of fruits and flowers. Here the same religious service was gone through in all its details as at the shrine of the three Buddhas. The abbot elect did the kau-tau before the images of the three abbots, and prayed that the mantles of these his sainted predecessors in office might fall upon him. The next halt the procession made was in the large kitchen, in which there is an altar dedicated to the genius who presides over the vegetable diet of Buddhist monks, and before which the same religious ceremony was performed. On leaving the kitchen, the abbot elect and his suite moved on to a large dormitory, and there worshipped an idol representing the guardian of dormitories.

Thence the procession returned to the chapter-house, and I was surprised to find that the floor of it was covered with an European carpet. At the end of this hall a raised throne was placed, and behind it hung a large piece of scarlet embroidery on which a Kilun was represented in gold. A table and altar stood in front of the throne, the latter being covered with red satin, richly embroidered; an incense-burner was upon it, and, as is always the case, it contained powdered incense in which worshippers place lighted joss-sticks. A large glass, framed in carved black wood, stood at the end of the hall. These high glasses, which resemble our cheval glasses, are placed in Buddhist monasteries as emblems of purity. Proceeding up the hall the abbot elect prostrated himself before the small altar, and, having performed the kau-tau to the throne, rose and placed three lighted joss-sticks in the incense-burner. He then stood at the right-hand corner of the table, and listened to the rules of the order, which were read aloud to him by one of the monks. We were standing close to the table, and so had the *coup d'œil* of the brilliantly lighted hall, with rows of monks arranged on each side of it. The abbot elect now moved towards the throne, attended by his two chaplains, and stood in front of it. He took up a brown hair

switch, and whisked it to the right, then to the left, and over his head and shoulders. This signified that all evil was removed far from him. He was now conducted to the throne by his two chaplains, who spread his silk vestment over the back of it as he took his seat. All the monks advanced, and did the kau-tau to their new abbot. On their retiring, some mandarins in full costume walked up the hall, and, having placed joss-sticks in the incense-burner, prostrated themselves before the abbot. The ceremonial of installation was now over, and the abbot, accompanied by his attendants, passed into his private suite of rooms. He afterwards held a *levée*. The first to attend it were the monks of the monastery and those who had come from other monasteries to assist at the ceremony. As each monk advanced, he made a movement as if he would kneel, but the abbot, taking him by the hand, prevented him doing so, whereupon the monk placed his head first on one shoulder and then on the other of the abbot. After all the monks had paid their respects to the old man, several mandarins in full dress came into the room to congratulate him. And here we noticed a piece of priestly arrogance. When these mandarins prepared to kneel to do him homage, the abbot did not attempt to prevent their

kneeling before him, but received their obeisance with a benign smile. After the *levée* was over, the abbot retired to another apartment and took off his red vestment. He only rested, however, for a few moments, and then the poor old man began to make his return visits to the monks, trudging along the dimly-lighted cloisters, knocking at the door of each cell, and saluting its inmate. I pitied him cordially, for he looked unequal to the fatiguing duties imposed upon him, and I noticed that when he knelt to perform the numerous *kau-tans* at the various shrines, he seemed to have much difficulty in rising from his knees. The office of abbot of a Buddhist monastery lasts only three years. The retiring abbot, however, can be re-elected. We now left the Honam Monastery, intending to return to it in a few hours' time, as we had been invited by the abbot to luncheon, and we also wished to see the monks partake of a banquet, in honour of the occasion, in the large refectory. We took a boat called by the Chinese a *wang-shuee-too*, or ferry-boat, and crossed the river to the Chaplaincy, where we arrived at seven A.M.

A little before eleven o'clock, we called our sampan and re-crossed the river to the monastery. On arriving, Henry again offered the abbot his

congratulations, and received a hearty welcome from him in return. As we passed by several rooms constituting the suite set apart for the abbot, we saw tables with luncheons laid out on them. Chinese gentlemen were sitting round them, and partaking of the abbot's hospitality. We were ushered by our host into one of these apartments, and invited to seat ourselves at a small round table. Upon our doing so, vegetable soups of various kinds were handed to us. The abbot walked up and down the room, coming to our table occasionally to press us to partake more freely of his hospitality. He did not, I noticed, sit down to eat with any of his guests. After we had finished our luncheon, we passed on to a large reception hall, in which the monks were assembling for dinner, to the sound of a wooden tom-tom, a method usually adopted for calling monks to religious services and meals. The monks now began to file out of the hall, walking two and two abreast, and we hastened to the refectory, so that we might see them enter and assemble there. The refectory, called by the Chinese Tchi-Tong, is an immense hall having an altar at the upper end of it. Eight long narrow tables go down the length of this hall, four on each side. Benches are placed on one side of the tables only, that is, on the left of the tables on the left side of the refectory, and

on the right of the tables on the other side of the refectory. In this manner the whole of the monks when at their meals face the centre of the room, and so can be seen by the abbot, who sits by himself at a small table at the lower end of the hall. A basin full of rice, and a plate containing green vegetables were placed, with chopsticks, for each monk. When all the monks had entered the refectory, and were standing in their places at the tables, the abbot, preceded by a band of music, arrived, and went to the small table at the end of the hall, his chaplains standing on each side of him. A grace was now chanted by the monks. Whilst all were still standing, one of the chaplains handed a basin to the abbot, who filled it with rice, and elevating it, blessed it. The chaplain then took the basin out of the refectory, and emptied the rice, as food for the birds of the air, on a tripod standing in the courtyard.

The monks now seated themselves, and the repast began, and I must say that all who were present did ample justice to it, having their basins replenished again and again by lay brothers, who carried rice round the tables in large pails. The abbot took but a scanty meal, just tasting the rice and vegetables placed before him. This meal was, as far as he was concerned, a form only, as he dined

in private afterwards. The party of monks was unusually large, and must have numbered more than three hundred, as monks from other monasteries were partaking of the hospitality of the Hai-Chwang-Tsze on this occasion. In the refectory I noticed several large boards which were hung against the walls, and I learned that they contained sayings from the Buddhist classics. As silence is observed at all meals, it is considered that the monks can be edified by reading and meditating upon these good precepts as they silently eat their food. The abbot now rose from the table, and, preceded by the musicians, was conducted back to his private apartments. We then sauntered leisurely through the quadrangles of the monastery to the landing-stage to rejoin our sampan. This monastery possesses much to interest a visitor, and I am never tired of going over it. One of the objects of interest, and which I was surprised beyond measure to find here, is the Shue-Kuuk, or printing-office, in which Buddhist liturgies for the use of monasteries are printed. I have seen the process used in printing, and will try to describe it to you. A block covered with Chinese characters, cut in relief, is smeared over with Indian ink. A sheet of paper is then placed over it, which, on being closely pressed, adheres to the block, and receives the impression of the

characters. It is then removed. The sheets that I have seen printed off have been very clear. The Chinese claim to be the inventors of the art of printing, and with justice, as they have known and practised it for many centuries. The funeral pyre in the gardens of the monastery is another object of great interest. We went to see it the other day, and I then had an evidence of the extreme fear that the Chinese entertain of ghosts. One of our waiting-boys, Ahee by name, was with us in the garden, but nothing Henry said could induce him to go near the funeral pyre, or the hut containing cinerary urns, or the ossuaries. Indeed, he candidly acknowledged that he was afraid of the spirits of the deceased monks. The pyre is built of brick, and looks like a small tower as you approach it. The open doorway is wide enough only to admit the cremation chair, in which the corpse of a dead brother is placed and carried to the pyre. The chair with its human contents is then placed in the pyre on four stones, and faggots are piled up round it. After some prayers have been chanted by the assembled monks for the repose of the departed one's soul, the senior monk takes a lighted torch and sets fire to the faggots. At intervals small pieces of sandal wood are cast into the flames. When the human ashes have become cold they are collected, placed

in a cinerary urn, and deposited in a hut built near to the pyre for the purpose. Here the cinerary urns remain until the third month of the year, when their contents are emptied into red bags and thrown into a large ossuary, which also stands near the funeral pyre. Another large ossuary, which I have seen in these gardens, has been closed, as it has received its full complement of human ashes, viz., the ashes of 4948 monks, and more than this a Buddhist is not allowed to deposit in one ossuary. At Henry's request, the monk who accompanied us the other day opened the door of the room in which cremation chairs are kept ready for use, and so I not only saw them, but had the whole method of their use explained to me. From this ghastly subject I must turn to one that will amuse you. In a sty^e built close to the quadrangle of this monastery I saw several large fat pigs, which are regarded as sacred, having been offered to Buddha by votaries. A wooden board is placed on the wall of the sty^e, and on it are written characters, requesting visitors not to beat or disturb these sacred pigs. It goes on further to state, that should any one do so in spite of this warning, an all-seeing eye will take note of it, and that the offender will be punished on the day of account. Near the sty^e is a poultry yard, in which I was amused at seeing a number of

cocks, ducks, and geese, which are also regarded as sacred, having been offered to Buddha by votaries as thank-offerings for mercies received. It is regarded as a work of merit by the followers of Buddha to save life, and so they buy sheep, goats, pigs, fowls, ducks, geese, and pigeons at the markets, and place them in these harbours of refuge, leaving with the monks a sum of money to provide food for them. Male birds only are presented to Buddha, as they are regarded as more acceptable offerings than the female birds. A large fish-pond in these gardens is stocked by fish, which have also been brought to the monastery as votive offerings.

THE END.

